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ABSTRACT

Drawn from a California conference that brought together writing instructors and researchers, the papers in this compilation address problems in writing, policies affecting both writing instruction and assessment, and possibilities for improving both areas. Papers in the first section of the book represent positions of eight separate entities: (1) the public, (2) the media, (3) the California State University, (4) the University of California, (5) private colleges and universities, (6) community colleges, (7) public schools, and (8) the California Writing Projects. Papers in the second section focus in depth on specific topics in writing research, including methodologies used in research on the composing process, the writing problems of speakers of languages other than English, writing programs of professional and technical writers, remedial writing, and writing assessment. (FL)

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Policies, Problems, and Possibilities

CS 207 206

WRITING:
POLICIES, PROBLEMS, AND POSSIBILITIES

The proceedings of a conference co-sponsored by SWRL Educational Research and Development and by California State University, Long Beach. Held at SWRL, Los Alamitos, California, May 7, 1982.

Edited by

Bruce Cronnell and Joan Michael

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1982

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PREFACE

Relegated to a low priority in the curriculum for far too long, writing is again receiving the attention that it justly deserves. Now, educational institutions as well as the research community have put writing back on the front burner.

Recognizing the importance of a dialogue between researchers and practitioners, the Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development (SWRL) and California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) decided that it was an opportune time to co-sponsor a conference on writing. Over the past ten years, SWRL has been involved in the research and development aspects of composition instruction, primarily with funding from the National Institute of Education. Similarly, CSULB (along with other state colleges and universities) has been increasingly active in writing assessment and instruction: incoming students must take a writing proficiency test (and receive remedial instruction if needed); all students (graduates as well as undergraduates) must meet a writing proficiency requirement for graduation. Thus, as neighbors sharing similar interests, SWRL and CSULB jointly planned the program that led to the May 7, 1982 conference and eventually to the collection of papers found in this volume.

In keeping with the idea of dialogue, it was decided that the papers should basically fall into two categories: (a) position papers on policies and problems and (b) research papers on the possibilities (i.e., what can be done) in writing instruction in selected areas.

Position Papers. To present the position papers, panelists were invited to represent eight separate entities: the public, the media, The California State University, The University of California, private colleges and universities, community colleges, public schools, and the California Writing Projects. It is evident from the panel papers that, regardless of the constituency represented, there is agreement that students on the whole write poorly, if at all. While a variety of causal factors are mentioned by the individual panelists, clearly there is one common thread: Students at all levels need to write more than they do now; they need to be encouraged to write on a regular basis and to be taught what is good writing and what is not. Recognizing the pervasiveness and seriousness of the problem, panelists report policies, programs, and legislation that have been implemented or are in the process of being put into effect to improve student writing.

Research Papers. Following the panel presentations, five papers focused in depth upon specific topics in research on writing. Obviously, it was necessary to be selective in determining which research issues should be addressed. Considering, therefore, that the audience at this conference would be drawn from elementary and secondary schools, community colleges, as well as from four-year colleges and universities and graduate-degree-granting institutions, the sponsors chose areas that would have broad interest and applicability to all levels of education, both public and private. Thus, the five research papers contained in this volume cover the following aspects of writing:

- As a background to the remaining four research papers, Ann Humes' paper discusses the composing process itself, the methodologies employed in the research on this process, and the results of this research in terms of the processes and subprocesses.

- In the paper by Huynh Dinh Te, the unique writing problems for speakers of other languages are identified, and strategies and techniques for teaching writing to such students are described.

- Joseph Williams, in his paper on writing programs for professional and technical persons, stresses the need for understanding "the nature of discourse itself."

- Addressing the topic of remedial writing courses, Mike Rose questions whether the typical courses "limit more than [they] foster growth in writing" and offers alternative suggestions for a "remedial writing curriculum [that] fit[s] into the intellectual context of the university."

- The final paper, by Richard J. Stiggins, provides a status report on some current developments in writing assessment and compares and contrasts the use of writing samples with that of objective tests.

Concluding the conference and drawing the panel presentations and research papers together, Richard M. Clowes offers challenges for the future.

The goal of this publication is to stimulate continued thought and dialogue between the research community and the educational institutions in the best interest of meeting the needs of a literate, "writing" society. The editors hope that the points made here will further the discourse and provide a framework for new research on the writing process and increased impetus for efforts to improve the writing skills of our students.

Joan Michael
Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research
School of Education
California State University, Long Beach

Bruce Cronnell
Senior Member of the Professional Staff
SWRL Educational Research and Development

WELCOMING REMARKS

From SWRL Educational Research and Development

On behalf of SWRL, I would like to welcome you all to this writing conference, co-sponsored by our good friends and colleagues at California State University, Long Beach. We at SWRL are pleased to host this meeting as part of our mission--improving the quality of education.

Because my own training is in law, I am a strong supporter of good writing instruction throughout our educational system. Many of my friends and their children ask me what's the most important requirement for success in law school and in the practice of law. I invariably tell them to learn to write: Take every possible writing course in high school and university. Learn to write. Anyone who learns to write will breeze through law school, and the bar exam will be a snap. And I've had several of my advisees come back and tell me, "You know, that was darn good advice."

Of course, law isn't the only area in which writing is important. The ability to write well is also a prerequisite to success in all professions, including those represented on our panel today--education, research, journalism, and, of course, civic leadership.

I know from looking at the names and affiliations of the speakers that you will have an excellent conference. Thank you for coming.

William H. Hein, Jr.
Deputy Executive Director, Administration
SWRL Educational Research and Development

From California State University, Long Beach

I am especially pleased to share Mr. Hein's welcome to you as we begin this conference on Writing: Policies, Problems, and Possibilities. In this joint sponsorship with SWRL, I am reminded of the functions that each institution serves in matters such as the one before us today. This joint endeavor is symbolic both of our mutual research interests and of the practical side of our educational missions.

We at California State University, Long Beach not only are interested in research into the problems of writing, but also, because of our role in providing educators for our public education system, are intimately concerned with testing the practical consequences of research--both our own and that of others--and communicating the results and possibilities of that research to our many publics.

As a pragmatist who desires to see ideas put to work and who wishes to test the validity and worthwhile nature of ideas, I commend both speakers and audience at this symposium. We have much to discuss, evaluate, learn, and put into practice.

At the heart of our discussions today is the recognition of controlled foresight--the ability to maintain the institutions of the past while remaking them to suit new conditions. This means that the most elegant theory must bear the responsibility of inspection, and that change--when it happens--should be change that we as free and creative individuals help to formulate as part of the process of inquiry. The test of a theory is not to be discovered in its internal logic, but by setting the theory to work and discovering its consequences.

For this reason, symposia such as the one today are crucial. Accordingly, I am happy to welcome you and to commend the organizers.

Glendon F. Drake
Vice President for Academic Affairs
California State University, Long Beach

PANEL PAPERS

Policies and Problems

FROM THE PUBLIC'S POINT OF VIEW

> Johnie is funny, smart, and nice. Johnie is big, but is not very tall. Johnie has blond hair. Johnie likes to ride his horse. He does not like school. He likes to go boating and fishing. He wants to be an animal studier. His favirote animal he wants to study is the dolphin. He liked to study them because he wants to know why they are smater than man. He wants to own a animal labratory when he grows up. He also likes to find dinosaur bones. In school the best subject for him is science.

This paragraph was written by an above-average student for an English writing assignment. The teacher returned it with a "B" grade as the only mark on the page. There were no corrections, suggestions, or comments by the teacher.

What opinion does this student have of his writing? As his mother I can tell you that he considers himself a good seventh-grade writer who makes no mistakes, has no reason to rewrite or try longer sentences with more complex structure. This is not an isolated example of his writing assignments. During his first semester in junior high school only three words were written on his papers: "Good," "Good," and "Good." He has never had any constructive criticism of his writing by his English teacher. With a few exceptions, the same situation existed throughout his elementary school experience.

The Public

It is my opinion that the teaching of writing takes a back seat in English classes today. In the second semester of this same English class, the teacher dropped the book-report requirement. The weekly class contract contains six pages of reading comprehension tests with multiple-choice answers, one page of grammar, two pages of spelling practice, and the weekly spelling test. No sentences are required in spelling. The only regular writing requirement is a journal entry of any length. It is not marked or commented upon by the teacher.

What does the public think about Johnny's writing ability and the teachers who instruct him? When the public reads Johnny's prose, they blame it on the system and ask what happened to the dedicated teachers who used to correct his errors, required him to rewrite assignments, gave homework, encouraged reading of good books and writing experience. Parents wonder why constructive criticism is "out" and interpersonal relationship is "in" with the new English teachers. They may also wonder why Johnny doesn't like school with its easy grades and few assignments.

Comparisons with public education of yesteryear are unfair, but unavoidable. The students, the teachers, the environment, and the society are not the same today. Even English language usage has changed, but it is still the primary criteria by which we judge the individual student's education and, collectively, the success or failure of public education. The public's conclusions must be seriously considered by the educational community if we hope to regain taxpayer support for our school system.

I submit the following four points as areas for consideration. They represent both lay and professional educators' points of view on problems in the teaching of writing, with some possible changes cited.

Engaged Learning and Time on Task

The cutbacks in the total number of school days and in the length and number of classes have created

problems in many school districts throughout California. Within individual schools, a proliferation of required subjects and teaching assignments has diminished the time for teaching basic subjects. The "back-to-basics" movement has stressed the mechanics of English to the point of overkill while leaving little time on task for the actual practice of writing. We need to evaluate and reassign time within the English period, with greater emphasis on developing writing style.

This evaluation should also include the length of writing assignments as well as the quality. Kirst (1982) has reported that only 3% of the student's time is spent on writing more than one paragraph. In reviewing my son's writing assignments for the last eight months, I was amazed to see that none of his English papers had more than one paragraph. Only metal shop and social studies papers exceeded one page in length.

Homework and extra-credit assignments in writing present opportunities for practice and possible stimulation from the home. Writing experiences in areas of the student's own choosing should be encouraged and rewarded by recognition, publication, oral presentation, or any appropriate and positive technique.

Constructive Criticism

The role of the teacher as a writing critic is sadly neglected. The fact that being a critic is demanding in terms of time and training is the underlying problem that should be addressed. Individual assistance in writing development is essential. How to supply this missing ingredient in the teaching of writing is a challenge to everyone.

The process of review and evaluation by both the teacher and the student and then the required rewriting is part of the technique of teaching writing. Not only sentence structure, but also paragraph planning and composition flow need to be stressed in this critique at the secondary level.

Required Reading of Good Literature

To stimulate reading in this age of television, teachers have allowed students to read books of their own choosing, regardless of the author's literary talent (or lack of it). The reading of classics is relegated to short periods in the classroom. This lack of exposure to good writing is reflected in the student's own writing style. The sentences are simple, the structure repetitive, and the subjects lack depth.

Although free reading should be encouraged, the requirement of reading works by recognized authors must be given first priority both in and outside of school. Students should review the author's writing as well as their own with emphasis on language usage, writing techniques, theme and flow, etc. This critique by the student serves as a teaching aid in writing.

Writing Ability of the Teacher

The teacher's own writing ability should be a stimulus to the students. One-word comments on the paper will not help students improve their writing. Suggestions for improvement show not only how it could be done, but also that the teacher considers it important to work on writing ability as well as on spelling, punctuation, etc.

Obviously all teachers should be able to communicate effectively in oral and written English. However, the English teacher should be uniquely qualified to show students the techniques employed in good writing. The teacher's training must also include writing practice, evaluation by master writing teachers, and rewriting.

Within a year, all new K-12 teachers in California public schools will be required to pass a writing test before receiving a credential. The specific skills to be assessed are formulation and development of ideas, clarity and consistency, sentence and paragraph structure, and appropriate word choice, as well as standard English usage, including punctuation, capitalization,

grammar, and spelling. It is hoped that the emphasis on writing competency of all teachers will enable them to assist their students in writing throughout their school years. However, the burden and challenge of teaching writing will remain with the English teachers in the secondary schools of California.

Georganne Thomsen
Education Director
League of Women Voters of
California

REFERENCE

Kirst, M. Improving schools in an era of fiscal constraints. Paper presented at the community conference sponsored by the California Coalition for Fair School Finance, Los Angeles, March 1982.

A VIEW FROM THE MEDIA

Writing can be frightening for kids and for adults. There is always the fear you will make a fool of yourself. And, unlike a silly remark made in conversation or dropping your fork under the table, a stupidity on paper sits there for all to see.

Yet, rather than putting teachers and their students at ease about writing, most academic experts make the whole undertaking sound more difficult than it is. The California State Department of Education's new handbook on teaching writing begins with this mouthful:

> The writing process might be described as having several stages or phases, including pre-writing, writing, responding, revising, editing, developing skills with the conventions of writing, evaluating, and post-writing . . .. The stages should not be thought of as necessarily sequential or linear in nature. Rather, the stages are largely recursive. (Smith, 1982, p. 9)

Imagine that. You would need a checklist just to keep up with all those "stages and phases." Academicians are too fond of dividing everything into stages, phases, facets, aspects, and categories. This situation reminds me of a line, attributed to Robert Benchley, which says something to the effect that the world is basically divided into two categories of people--those who divide everything into two categories and those who don't.

Students need to be encouraged--required, I guess--to write often and to feel comfortable writing.

The sort of expert advice on writing exemplified by the quotation from the handbook, besides being miserable to read, intimidates more than it helps.

As a former kid who was often intimidated by grammar teachers and writing assignments, I would like to see the teaching of writing made more simple and clear, less abstract and mystifying.

However, I do think that it is quite remarkable that the public schools in California are getting serious about teaching writing. Insisting that students write is a political decision in the best sense of the term. We always need to ask the question--what kind of students do we want to emerge from our schools? What must they learn? What really counts?

If we say let's "go back to the basics" and require high school students to balance a checkbook or fill out a job application--and many states are saying just that--we are settling for the least common denominator, the absolute minimum. Out of necessity, the schools will then spend most of their time teaching these low level skills to everyone.

Writing is of a higher magnitude because writing is a disciplined way of thinking. Learning to write clearly and learning to think clearly go together. I do not know how to separate the two. An education system that decides it will try to teach all children to write is one that has made the political decision that all children must learn to think critically and clearly. That is no small ambition and is one to be treated with respect and admiration.

David G. Savage
Education Writer
Los Angeles Times

REFERENCE

Smith, T. R. (Ed.) Handbook for planning an effective writing program. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1982.

A VIEW FROM THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

During the last decade or so, institutions of higher education across the country have responded to the decline in the writing skills of their students. The Trustees of The California State University (CSU) have instituted policies designed to raise the level of writing skills both of entering freshmen and of university graduates. Implementation of these regulations has identified problems and, at the same time, suggested possibilities.

CSU Policies on Writing

Admission Requirements. Let me begin by discussing those policies that have impact on entering freshmen--in 1981, about 26,000 students. Beginning in fall 1984, all students admitted to CSU must have taken four years of college preparatory English. At present CSU plans to ask the principal and the English faculty of each high school to decide which courses are college preparatory and to have these courses identified on a student's transcript. We are now consulting with high school teachers of English on guidelines that will assist in defining these courses. We are especially interested in advice about electives and about recognition for courses in English as a second language. And we want suggestions about how to make allowances for those students coming to us in 1984 who may not have been taking college preparatory courses in their freshman and sophomore years.

English Placement Test. While CSU's changes in admissions requirements may be new to some, most people are familiar with the test of writing proficiency CSU has been requiring of entering freshmen for the past

five years, the English Placement Test. This two-and-one-half-hour test features multiple-choice subtests of reading, sentence construction, and logic and organization; it also requires 45 minutes of writing on an assigned topic. The purpose of the test is to identify those students still in need of assistance in order to write well enough to succeed in college-level work. Those who do not demonstrate sufficient writing proficiency enroll in a remedial program. The nature of these programs varies from campus to campus, but most are one-term courses in writing.

Advanced Placement. Also familiar are CSU's efforts to give incentives to students to take challenging English courses in high school. CSU awards credit toward the degree to those who can demonstrate that they write as well as students who are completing the freshmen composition courses. The exams accepted systemwide are the Advanced Placement English tests and CSU's English Equivalency Examination.

CSU Looks Toward the Future

By setting admissions policies, requiring screening examinations, and offering the incentive of credit by examination, CSU seeks to encourage entering students to prepare themselves for college writing. Many believe that a major problem is that of convincing students in high school that they should seek out those courses that will require writing and provide writing evaluation. Few students seem to understand that they delay their educational progress if they must undertake remediation as freshmen. Students will not receive credit toward the degree for remedial courses at CSU; and many, despite a remedial program, may never realize their potential. Most will remain reluctant writers at best.

We recognize, however, that there is much more for CSU to do to improve student writing skills than simply make policies. We want to encourage closer, more frequent communication between university faculty and teachers of English about the kinds of writing and reading students need to be able to do when they come to the university, to provide information to teachers

about performance of their students on the English Placement Test and in their freshman courses, and to share common experiences regarding the variety of methods that can be used to teach writing.

This conference is an example of what we can do together. And there are plans for other efforts to encourage long-term discussions about curriculum between the faculties of campuses and local high schools. Cooperation holds great possibilities for our own professional growth and for the enhanced learning of our students. The preservation of a literate, free society demands nothing less.

Linda Bunnell Jones
Associate Dean, Academic
Program Improvement
The California State University

WRITING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Because of the complexity of the University of California system and the uniqueness of each of its campuses, it would be very difficult to generalize about the efforts being made within the system to improve the writing skills of its students. I am, therefore, confining my remarks to (1) a description of some of the concerns about writing that have been apparent at the University's Berkeley campus and (2) a brief review of several instructional activities that have evolved around the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP), which since 1974 has become a model for many campus-wide programs throughout the nation and the world.

Concerns about Writing

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (1981) reports that students at the secondary school level are being asked to do many short pieces of writing, but not to do extensive, critical, longer pieces of writing. That report echoes something that Harold Rosen at the London Institute of Education said several years ago when talking about the British examination system. He said that students are, throughout the years of schooling, being asked to report their conclusions in writing and are not being taught the steps to help them arrive at those conclusions. I think that in the last ten years one of the great breakthroughs in the teaching of writing has been the fact that no longer are students simply being assigned writing and being graded on that writing. Instead they are being taught the stages of the writing process; they are being taught how to go about generating and sustaining a piece of writing.

Yet, a persistent writing problem on the Berkeley campus is that, outside of the English Department, students are simply not being assigned enough writing. And this, of course, is one of those circular problems. If students are not being given enough writing to do, then their writing does not improve. If their writing does not improve, then professors increasingly do not want to assign writing. And so the problem persists. There are, however, some changes in the making. The Winter 1981 issue of Teaching at Berkeley, to which professors submit examples of recent innovations in their teaching practice, was devoted to writing on the Berkeley campus. It was encouraging to see examples of assignments from social welfare, political science, public health, architecture, and anthropology. This step was the beginning of a cross-disciplinary discussion on how to use writing in the different disciplines as an aid to students' learning.

Instructional Activities Responding to Student Writing Deficiencies

Subject A/BAWP Workshop. The Subject A department has established a summer workshop for the teachers in 42 secondary schools that are major feeders to the Berkeley campus. These teachers are given instruction on how the Subject A instructors teach writing so that they in turn can prepare their students better for the university placement examination. Such training introduces teachers to both analytical and holistic assessment procedures used in Subject A to determine the writing competence of entering freshmen, and further introduces them to the instructional methods of the Subject A course. In short, by the end of two weeks, participants know the level of writing competence expected of students in satisfaction of the Subject A requirement. The Workshop has largely dismantled historic barriers of misunderstanding and hostility between the University and the schools regarding the Subject A requirement. In addition, the 1981 workshop focused on recruiting teacher participants from inner-city schools with heavy minority enrollments--schools not traditionally UCB feeders.

Graduate Student Practicum. Another interesting development on the Berkeley campus is a realization of the plight of the graduate student who, being faced with a doctoral proposal and then a doctoral dissertation or an extended paper, does not have anywhere to go for help with writing. Three years ago the University established a graduate student practicum, for credit, in which students from departments across the campus come together for eight weeks during the summer. The practicum is taught by an instructor who has participated in the BAWP Summer Institute, and the students read their works in progress to one another and receive sustained and constructive criticism. Participants report that this experience was the first time that anyone had ever really paid attention to their writing and talked to them about style and development.

BAWP Pre-Service Credential Program. This graduate/English credential program emphasizes the teaching of writing--an aspect of the English major not usually stressed in undergraduate preparation. Pre-service credential students in English must take a three-week intensive version of the Bay Area Writing Project Summer Institute in January of the credential year. And as part of that program, they are required to do a research project in the schools.

Bay Area Writing Project Campus Programs

In addition to the direct service to the UCB instructional programs, the BAWP offers three additional programs that bring teachers to campus for demonstrations and instruction on the teaching of writing.

Invitational Summer Institute. Over two hundred teachers of composition (elementary, secondary, and college) have now participated in Invitational Summer Institutes. This program, which remains the central effort of the project, trains future BAWP Teacher/Consultants for five weeks, four days per week. The focus is placed on teacher presentations and demonstrations of approaches to writing, teachers' writing, discussion of teachers' writing in editing-response groups, and the examination of research and key materials in the field of written composition.

Open Program. The BAWP Open Program, offered as a credit course in UC Berkeley's Summer Program for Teachers, is open to all K-13 teachers.

BAWP Partnership Programs. In 1981 BAWP and UC Berkeley's Outreach Program staff identified twenty-five teachers of minority students for special training through the California Writing Project program. Most teachers in this program are themselves members of minority groups: Asian, Black, Hispanic.

Conclusion

While all campuses in the University of California system have been taking steps to improve the quality of students' writing, I have confined my remarks to examples of programs being implemented on the Berkeley campus, where the writing program has been embodied and exemplified in the Bay Area Writing Project. This and other writing projects, which have been direct outgrowths of the BAWP, are the topic of another panel paper. All writing projects share a common goal--the improvement of writing instruction.

Mary K. Healy, Co-Director
Bay Area Writing Project
University of California,
Berkeley

REFERENCE

National Assessment of Educational Progress. Reading, thinking and writing: Results from the 1979-80 National Assessment of Reading and Literature (Report No. 11-L-01). Denver, CO: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1981.

A VIEW FROM PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

> "Well," said Owl, "the customary procedure in such cases is as follows."
>
> "What does Crustimoney Proseedcake mean?" said Pooh.
>
> "It means the Thing To Do."
>
> ". . . As long as it means that, I don't mind," said Pooh humbly. (Milne, 1954, p. 50)

I do not know why Pooh need have felt humble about it. Owl should have used "thing to do" in the first place. You will agree with me, I'm sure, that Pooh Bear, for all the apparent naivete of his language, speaks far more effectively than portentous Owl. A. A. Milne never, so far as I know, composed a style manual. He should have. And of course E. B. White did--rather, dusted one off (Strunk & White, 1978). I suppose we all share the delightful image of White's old mentor, William Strunk, Jr., leaning far, far forward over his Cornell desk, his coat lapels grasped in his two hands, and repeating in his husky, conspiratorial voice, "Omit needless words!" Rule 17, it is. Can any other writing injunction have projected so far or sold so well?

I give my students Strunk and White's (1978) Elements of Style, there at the science seminary where I have taught for nearly thirty years. I give it to my Freshmen; for though I am teaching a history course, a part of the object with it and with all the other "Freshman Humanities"--out of the smorgasbord of which all incoming students must choose--is to get these

students to write properly. So I give them Strunk and White, and work up exercises and quizzes for Rule 17 and the others, and hope that in their papers the influence of that pair will be discernible.

But of course their papers aren't about Rule 17. My students write about history: European and Asian. First, then, they must read some. And here, with respect to writing, the trick--and it applies to all of us, schools, colleges, public places and private places--is to remember that good prose does not model itself on bad. Language is a matter of ear. Hear or read good, clear, simple English, and you may gradually begin to speak and write it. The longer, therefore, I teach, the more determined I become to throw Owl off the reading list and squeeze Pooh on. And what are the Owls of the school or college bookstore? Why, usually the textbooks, those inert, vapid, composites produced (as, the joke has it, a committee once produced the camel) by publishing houses. Some texts are better than others. Very few approach the prose level of the true book. The true book, written for self and reader, not for syllabus and school board, is where you find Pooh. So I say, with no particular expectation of persuading anyone since I do not persuade even my own Caltech colleagues, don't teach texts. If you are "doing" the wars of religion, give them Garrett Mattingly's (1959) Armada. If you are doing the First World War, give them All Quiet on the Western Front (Remarque, 1929). If you are doing Marxism, give them Animal Farm (Orwell, 1946). If you want them to write well, give them reading that educates the ear, reading to emulate. Do not teach texts! Do not teach texts! Do not teach texts!

This is a panel on policies and problems; and there is my policy--fitting, I argue, high and low and from side to side. But there are two problems that are perhaps in some degree peculiar to Caltech and places like it.

There is the problem of faculty. My freshmen are not what they could be, nor are Stanford's nor Pomona's, the women at Mills nor the hordes that pour

into USC, so that all they need is a dose of good reading with a touch of Strunk and White on the side. Some of them need professional help. And who is to help them?

It used to be that in private colleges and universities this professional help was provided by the English faculty. No more. For the English faculty itself is no more. It has been years since Caltech has had a Professor of English, years indeed since we have had an English course. What we have instead is Literature, English in large part, French and Russian and German in lesser, but always Literature. And another thing. I came to Caltech in 1955 to teach. My young tenure-aspiring colleagues on what used to be the "English" faculty come to Caltech to do research. Their training has had nothing to do with helping Owl become Pooh, and their professional future depends upon concentrating on anything but that task. They are no better equipped to teach speech or composition than are the biologists across the lawn.

That is the first of my two problems. The second is that while we detect no substantial lowering in the writing competence of the American-born Caltech freshmen, we are beginning to attract, in increasing numbers, frosh who were not born here at all; frosh who come straight from, or nearly straight from, East Asia. Perhaps science, and therefore Caltech, is peculiarly attractive to the ambitious from that part of the world. Certainly they do very well at it and are to be prized. But their English is often awful, nonfunctional, very nearly completely absent. Strunk, White, I, and my "literature" colleagues are helpless before their utter incapacity.

How, then, simple remedial composition for some, English as a second language for others, are to be taught at places like Caltech, are questions for which answers may be forthcoming here today. I shall listen attentively.

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A COMMUNITY COLLEGE VIEW

In preparation for this presentation, I surveyed one of our English classes at East Los Angeles College. Of the 21 students who answered my questionnaire, 38% are foreign born, 57% spoke another language before they learned English, and 43% do no reading for enjoyment. They average 15 hours of work per week and range in age from 28 to 51. This small, but probably not unique, sample reflects the dramatic changes taking place in our large urban two-year-college populations. The demographic changes in the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) point to a two-year-college student population that is becoming overwhelmingly female, minority, and, above all, underprepared (Faris, 1982).

About such students, Gibson (1979) reports:

> New students are poor at taking tests; they lack self-confidence in classroom situations; they expect failure; they are job-oriented to the point of being anti-intellectual. Their economic survival is much on their minds. They don't read very much. (p. x)

Given this phenomenon, what problems in the teaching of writing do we confront in two-year colleges? As my informal survey indicates, we now find many levels of English ability--or inability--in a single class, varying from many gradations among native speakers of English to an equal number among ESL students, all meeting in the melting pot of a developmental English class--a heterogeneous group resulting from inadequate placement procedures or from course offerings that no longer reflect true need. Added to this mix, a class

size of 35 or more students creates a less than optimal teaching situation.

Instruction of the Non-Traditional Student--Time for a Change

While our students are no longer traditional, we continue to employ traditional classroom approaches (Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Basic Skills, 1979); moreover, we frequently place a fundamental grammar course at the first rung of our composition ladder, despite evidence that grammar instruction has little effect on student writing.

Although Learning Assistance Centers and writing and language labs are now found on most campuses, funds for tutors are generally inadequate for the need; further, the requirement that tutors be full-time students limits the availability of qualified tutors (Akers, 1981). Frequently, too, these labs are underutilized by those students who need them most--those who must leave campus to begin their part-time or full-time jobs. Consequently, tutors would be better utilized in the classroom, giving instant response and encouragement to students who have grown accustomed to inadequate performance in English.

The LACCD study of developmental skills (Akers, 1981) states that "All instructors need to know the most effective strategies to use in teaching non-traditional students" (p. 25). We need workshops and staff development programs, especially those that emphasize the teaching of writing as process. More than any other group, developmental writers need to see their progress in writing--from the generation of ideas to a polished final draft. The traditional emphasis on the essay as a final product, to be red-penciled and graded once and for all, simply does not work with students with limited language ability or limited writing fluency.

Further, the LACCD report on developmental skills (Akers, 1981) has indicated that "faculty and staff members need to be aware of the cultural differences which affect classroom behavior and performance" (p. 27).

Regardless, however, of the type of student, we need to begin with writing if the goal of writing courses is correct, cogent writing. A growing number of our developmental students find even cursive writing an unaccustomed act. Shaughnessy (1977) found that

> The physical act of writing is of course fundamental to other writing skills. Yet students have often not mastered this skill by the end of high school . . .. Yet the same student might be a spirited, cogent talker in class. His problem is that he has no access to his thoughts or personal style through the medium of writing and must appear, whenever he writes, like a child. (p. 15)

Factors to be Considered

To assist faculty in teaching writing to non-traditional students and to provide students with repeated opportunities to write, we must consider factors such as staff development, assessment and placement, and standardization.

Staff Development. A Faculty Institute for the Improvement of Basic Skills Instruction was recently created as a joint effort of the Los Angeles Community Colleges and three area California State University campuses--Los Angeles, Northridge, and Dominguez Hills. This Institute is creatively and energetically confronting the issues of staff development and the dissemination of the latest research on new teaching strategies. Through workshops and conferences, the Institute will have an impact on ESL and writing instructors on 12 campuses.

Assessment and Placement. Inseparably intertwined with class size is the need for finely tuned assessment and placement procedures for all levels of writing courses--effective procedures for placing native speakers and ESL students equally well. At present, much attention and effort are directed to accurate placement of students in English 1 classes; however,

self-placement still occurs among students who bypass counseling, as well as among students on campuses where placement procedures are limited or not mandatory. As a result, students who enroll incorrectly in composition classes face another failure and deepen their conviction that they will never become effective writers.

For placement in English courses, a writing sample is indispensable. Akers (1981) has stated the following:

> The Committee also recommends that an English placement test be given to all students prior to their placement in freshman composition classes. They recognize the fact, however, that other means for students may be preferable at particular colleges with special conditions.
>
> Since accurate and fair diagnostic testing requires writing samples, which in turn should be read by teams of professional readers, such diagnostic testing should be funded by the state. (p. 37)

Improved assessment would enhance student success through a more homogeneous grouping of students, an indispensable condition for effective teaching.

Standardization. Finally, we need more standardization in the selection of textbooks, in course content, in evaluation, and in exit-level testing for our sequential writing courses. Students as well as instructors need to have a clear direction and readily accessible means of reaching their goal of improved student writing.

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PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

One of the recurring concerns of colleges, universities, and school districts across the nation is how to improve the writing skills of students. The concern is periodically stimulated by one of several factors: declining test scores, new knowledge about the teaching of writing, the inadequacy of writing skills among entering college students, and changes in the focus of curriculum and instruction.

School districts are attempting to meet the challenge of improving students' writing abilities, but certain problems impede progress. These problems have been grouped here into the following categories: (a) teacher preparation, (b) the place of writing in the curriculum, (c) motivation/attitude, (d) instructional practices, (e) assessment, and (f) instructional materials.

Teacher Preparation

Preservice training. Prospective teachers need to complete enough course work to become experienced, cogent writers as well as competent teachers of writing. Candidates for the Multiple and the Single Subjects Teaching Credentials are required either to complete a course in the methods of teaching reading or to pass the National Teacher Examination entitled "Introduction to the Teaching of Reading." No such requirement exists, however, to ensure that teachers are aware of appropriate and effective methods of teaching composition.

Elementary teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities generally include only one course that focuses on methods of teaching language arts. Frequently such courses cover several topics, leaving very little time for an in-depth study of the composing process and/or of how to teach composition.

Similarly, for the Single Subjects Teaching Credential, students must verify subject-matter competence either by obtaining a subject- matter waiver statement or by achieving a passing score on the appropriate subject-matter area examination of the National Teacher Examination. No guarantee, however, is made that the credential candidates who have met the waiver or examination requirement have received adequate or even any preparation in methods of teaching composition.

In-service Training. If teachers are to keep abreast of ways to assist their students to become better writers, the ever-expanding findings of research on the writing process must be made accessible to teachers through school district sponsored in-service education programs.

Writing in the Curriculum

The training of teachers is not, however, the full answer. The low status to which composition instruction has fallen in recent years has certainly contributed to the problems that we now encounter with student writing. Writing has seldom, if ever, been accorded the same curricular status as have reading and mathematics.

Writing problems may also be attributed to the fact that, for many years, reading, the conventions of language (spelling, grammar and usage, mechanics), and writing were taught in isolation (Graves, 1978). We know that people learn language in a sequence that moves from listening and speaking to reading and writing; therefore, an effective writing program builds on and is enhanced by oral language experiences as well as by extensive reading.

Motivation/Attitude

At the heart of successful writing is student motivation, and for this, teachers serve as models. If teachers perceive writing as a satisfying experience, they will transmit this positive attitude to students (Smith, 1981). Conversely, teachers who perceive writing as a tedious chore with trivial applications will have great difficulty motivating students to write.

Instructional Practices

"Teaching students how to be good writers requires direct instruction and practice on a variety of complex tasks." The process involves more than simply teaching the enabling skills. "Students must learn how to generate, select, and arrange their ideas. They must learn how to transcribe those ideas into written text, and they must learn how to revise and edit their writing" (Lawlor, 1981, p. 1).

Teachers have difficulty finding the time, however, to analyze problems of expression and to give students the guidance they need. The first draft often becomes the last. Once assignments are made and a complete product is presented to the teacher, the process ends. Yet, writing generally requires many drafts and revisions to get ideas into a form that satisfies the writer.

The editing and revision process requires feedback, which at some point involves teacher evaluation of student papers, a procedure that requires time. To reduce the paper load and to give students the opportunity to share their critical opinions and to self-correct, many teachers are providing students with more opportunities for peer editing. Having students internalize the criteria for writing gives them a skill they can take away from the classroom, rather than just a paper filled with red marks.

Assessment

The so-called return to basics and the current emphasis on accountability and evaluation have focused

undue attention on the teaching and testing of language conventions such as vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and mechanics. So much time is devoted to ensuring the mastery of isolated skills that little time is left for the application of those skills to the writing process. Fortunately, more and more writing tests are moving away from a total reliance on asking for labels and definitions. Several states and individual school districts are testing writing performance rather than limiting their tests to objective items that do not really test writing.

Instructional Materials

Until recently, textbooks and other prepared instructional materials stressed grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and other enabling skills. Workbook exercises seldom required students to write their answers. Marking, circling, and underlining were more common forms of responses. The various language arts programs did not seem to encourage the incorporation of composing tasks into the instructional sequence. Fortunately, more recent curriculum materials provide integrated language arts programs that include a balance among skill development, drill, and composition.

Conclusion

Every student should have the opportunity to develop both expressional and functional aspects of writing. Most children can learn to write well if given the time and training that schools have a responsibility to give to them. Teachers, school administrators, curriculum specialists, colleges and universities, parents, students, and the community must all work together to develop and implement carefully planned sequences of writing activities that will create in students genuine feelings of security and success.

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A VIEW FROM THE CALIFORNIA WRITING PROJECTS

Some years ago James Gray, University of California, Berkeley, had a dream that became reality in the summer of 1974--the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP). From that time on he has shared the dream and the model of the BAWP with thousands of teachers. Today there are 91 writing projects throughout the world including 80 in the contiguous United States and 11 others in places such as Alaska, Hawaii, the Virgin Islands, and even Southeast Asia. In the summer of 1981, 669 teachers from California participated in 17 different projects. During this past school year, these teachers have touched more than 14,000 other teachers through conferences and workshops. Funding for the 17 California Writing Projects comes from various sources: For 1981-82, more than $480,000 was provided by state and federal governments; matching funds (including services, supplies, and space) totaling more than $500,000 came from local school districts and colleges and universities.

The statistics alone are amazing, but even more stunning than numbers is the impact that this staff development program has had on students and teachers. Michael Scriven (1980), director of an evaluation conducted by the Carnegie Corporation, called the Writing Project movement "the best large scale effort to improve instruction now in operation in this country" (p. 1). The South Basin Writing Project (SBWP) is proud to be part of this effort.

Philosophy

The SBWP, like all writing projects, is based on the following assumptions:

1. the most effective teacher of teachers is usually another teacher who has had success;

2. successful teachers of writing can be identified and their teaching techniques effectively demonstrated to others;

3. as teacher writing improves, so does student writing;

4. writing is an integral part of the learning process in all disciplines at all grade levels;

5. teachers of writing need time during summer vacations to investigate current research in the teaching of writing.

Thus we bring together competent teachers who are willing to share their expertise, fortify them with professional pride and confidence, provide opportunities for them to become better writers, encourage them to read the current research about the teaching of writing, and ask them to prepare inservice presentations. Because of the workshop experience, teachers are changed. These changed teachers influence other teachers to change, and ultimately student writing changes.

Procedures

The process we have established for selecting participants for the SBWP summer workshops is simple yet thorough enough to guarantee the selection of the finest teachers interested in spending five weeks in the workshop. As steps in that process, we

1. conduct an information meeting for school district administrators explaining the purposes and procedures of the SBWP;

2. circulate to interested teachers an application form that must first be

returned to school district personnel for approval via a nomination form;

3. collect nomination and application forms from school district personnel;

4. conduct group interviews of applicants;

5. select participants based on data from the application forms and the interviews;

6. meet with selected participants prior to the workshops to plan summer work.

Problems

Money, as usual, remains a problem, although not so severe as it once was. Since the passage of AB 1254, the California Writing Project has received $250,000 each year to fund the 17 sites. Still, in these times of limited state spending and of increased teacher interest in summer workshops, money continues to be a source of difficulty.

A second problem concerns past participants who return to their school districts filled with zeal and enthusiasm, much like the novice missionary, eager to "spread the word." Sometimes they are regarded with suspicion by their colleagues who view any new, successful program as merely a fad that will quickly disappear. District curriculum consultants, as well, either cannot find the funds to schedule inservice workshops for other teachers within the district or can dismiss the trained consultants, questioning whether what they have to say and demonstrate is of value for other teachers. This problem is diminishing, I am happy to say, as more and more teachers and administrators hear of the effectiveness of the writing project.

Finally, more attention in the workshops needs to be given to the special needs of students whose first language is not English. Unfortunately, though the English as a second language population is increasing, the number of specially trained, outstanding ESL

teachers is not growing rapidly enough to meet the demand.

Activities

In the summer of 1982, SBWP conducted three separate workshops: a five-week invitational workshop for English and history teachers in grades K-14; a five-week invitational session for teachers of writing in grades K-12 who work primarily with minority students; a one-week session for previous participants, focusing on possibilities for research in their own writing classes. In these groups we had 14 elementary teachers, 8 middle school teachers, 9 high school teachers, and 1 community college instructor. These people came from 13 school districts near the California State University, Long Beach campus.

In addition, we continue to hold regional writing conferences on the CSULB campus. We also are conducting a Saturday conference for young writers, students from local schools who come to hear speakers and to share their own writing. Moreover, we make available consultants from our Speakers Bureau who can conduct inservice workshops for individual schools or school districts. As you can tell, the work of the SBWP continues throughout the year.

Conclusion

When I think of what has happened since 1974 because of Jim Gray, the Director of the National Writing Project, I am stunned. His vision and dedicated efforts have changed many lives and will continue to influence the teaching of writing for years to come. One man--what a difference he has made. I am thankful for him, as are thousands of other teachers and thousands and thousands of students.*

*Copies of a working bibliography of recent research, provided for summer 1981 participants, can be obtained by request from Dr. Alice Brekke, Department of English, California State University, Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, CA 90840.

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RESEARCH PAPERS

Possibilities

RESEARCH ON THE COMPOSING PROCESS

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Researchers have long been more interested in students' ability to read than in their ability to write. Recently, however, the research community has finally turned its attention toward writing. Although the amount of writing research is still relatively meager, it has, during the past few years, vastly increased knowledge of the composing process. Furthermore, writing research has undergone a transformation: Research techniques have expanded beyond the classical experimental paradigm. Now other methods are also considered appropriate for investigating the cognitive processes involved in composing texts.

This paper first discusses methodologies employed in recent research on the composing process. It then presents results of that research in terms of the process and subprocesses of writing. It closes by discussing limitations of the methodologies and conclusions about the results.*

METHODOLOGY

In comparison with what is known about human perception activities, relatively little is understood

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about human production activities such as writing (Gould, 1980). This lack of knowledge results partially from a corresponding lack of valid and reliable strategies and methodologies for studying production tasks.

Until the last decade, the methodology was dominated by the experimental method, which emphasizes what is quantifiable. Consequently, research focused on measurable aspects of written products rather than on the elusive behavior of the producers of those products.

Recently, however, research interest in the cognitive processes of writers has burgeoned (Emig, 1982). Now the research methodologies include laboratory case studies of the composing process, naturalistic studies, quasi-product studies that interpret results in terms of process, and studies that utilize somewhat unique procedures. These studies are the focus of this paper.

Case Studies

The roots of laboratory case studies of the composing process are usually traced to the seminal work of Janet Emig (1971). Emig studied the composing processes of eight high school seniors, selected by their teachers as good writers. The subjects met four times with the investigator and composed orally while composing on paper. Emig observed them during their writing, making notes and recording the oral composing. All eight subjects were also interviewed.

Subjects of laboratory case studies vary in number from one (e.g., Mischel, 1974) to 84 (e.g., Van Bruggen, 1946). However, following Emig's model, researchers generally limit their subjects to fewer than 20 because of the complexities of data collection and analysis. Subjects most frequently compose alone in a writing area theoretically free from distraction (e.g., Matsuhashi, 1981; Perl, 1979). These subjects occasionally have been elementary students (e.g., Sawkins, 1975) or junior high students (e.g., Van Bruggen, 1946), but more often they are high school

students (e.g., Emig, 1971; Matsuhashi, 1981; Mischel, 1974; Stallard, 1974), college students (e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981b; Perl, 1979), or experienced adults (e.g., Gould, 1980). Sometimes experts and relatively inexperienced writers are compared (e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981b; Gould, 1980).

In some studies, the researcher is in the same room with the writer, observing within the writer's view (e.g., Emig, 1971) or through a one-way screen (e.g., Van Bruggen, 1946). In other studies, the researcher observes outside the room on a videotape monitor (e.g., Matsuhashi, 1981).

Researchers make notes about the writer's behavior during composing (e.g., Emig, 1971; Matsuhashi, 1981; Perl, 1979), recording such activities as energetic spurts of writing or revising. These notes often guide interviews with the writers in order to stimulate their memories of the reasons for a particular composing behavior (e.g., Pianko, 1979). Interviews usually take place immediately after composing so that subjects can give accurate information (e.g., Pianko, 1979; Stallard, 1974). Interviews often include questions about subjects' writing activities and attitudes toward writing (e.g., Emig, 1971; Pianko, 1979).

Some researchers either assign or let writers select topics ahead of time, encouraging subjects to rehearse and plan (e.g., Emig, 1971; Matsuhashi, 1981; Sommers, 1980). Other researchers assign topics at the time subjects are to write, so these writers are unable to prepare for composing (e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981b; Gould, 1980).

Several researchers time behaviors such as reading and revising (e.g., Glassner, 1980; Matsuhashi, 1981; Perl, 1979; Pianko, 1979). Another behavior frequently investigated by timing methods is the pause phenomenon. Writers' pauses comprise an important area for composing-process research, since pausing consumes more than half the writer's composing time (e.g., Gould, 1980; Matsuhashi, 1981).

Some researchers examine the lengths of pauses between individual words, syntactic structures, or units of meaning (e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981b; Matsuhashi, 1981). Others investigate the total length of time that writers pause while composing a whole piece of discourse (e.g., Gould, 1980). Researchers claim that

> the lengths of pauses . . . and their location in the text . . . provide a temporal taxonomy or description of the real-time aspects of written language production from which inferences about planning and decision-making can be made. (Matsuhashi, 1981, p.114)

Still other case studies require subjects to talk while composing. Some subjects say only the words that they are writing (e.g., Emig, 1971), and others report on what they are thinking (e.g., Berkenkotter, 1982; Flower & Hayes, 1981b). This oral composing is tape-recorded. The audio recordings (and, when available, concomitant video recordings; e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981b) are often subjected to protocol analysis, which, according to cognitive psychologists, is a powerful tool for identifying psychological processes (Flower & Hayes, 1980a).

A protocol is a detailed, time-ordered record of a subject's writing behavior, including a transcript of the tape-recording of the writer's verbalizing during composing, as well as all the written material he or she produces (Flower & Hayes, 1980a). For a protocol, "subjects are asked to say aloud everything they think and everything that occurs to them while performing the task" (Hayes & Flower, 1980, p. 4). In analyzing protocols, the researcher infers the underlying psychological processes by which the subject performs the task (Hayes & Flower, 1980). Writing processes are "identified by matching the verbal protocol word for word with the writer's notes and text" (p. 21).

The works both of Linda Flower and John Hayes and of Sondra Perl are particularly significant for their contributions to protocol analysis. Flower and Hayes (1980a) have collected and analyzed many protocols in

recent years. They report that a typical protocol from a one-hour session includes 4-5 pages of a writer's notes and text as well as a 15-page manuscript typed from the taperecording. Perl's (1979) major contribution is an elaborate, effective coding system for protocol analysis. The system divides writers' behavior into 16 major categories and 15 subcategories. The coding system is complemented by Perl's numbering system for a time line. This numbering system allows her to measure the time of each writing behavior.

A far less complex protocol technique is used by Lillian Bridwell, who calls her procedure "the poor woman's protocol analysis" (Bridwell, 1981b). Bridwell asks writers to make notes, in the margins of their compositions, on what they are thinking about as they compose.

Naturalistic Studies

In sharp contrast to studies dealing with subjects who compose in a laboratory, naturalistic studies take place within the subject's usual setting for writing, whether that setting is the professional writer's context for composing (Berkenkotter, 1982) or the classroom (e.g., Edelsberg, 1981; Graves, in Gentry, 1980a). In most naturalistic studies, the investigator is a participant-observer.

In the study of one professional writer (Berkenkotter, 1982), the subject composed in his usual environment for writing, making no adjustments in writing time, topic, or procedures. The investigator collected data on his behavior, analyzed his notes and texts, and talked with him about his processes.*

*The researcher collected protocols for some episodes of writing; this procedure is not typical of naturalistic studies. However, the study is classified here as naturalistic because of other features of the project and because the writer contended that talking aloud quickly became natural.

Classroom studies are designated as participant-observer studies (Edelsberg, 1981; Emig, 1982). In these studies, the investigator functions within a classroom, where he or she records the events occurring in that setting. The participant-observer may also assist the teacher and/or the students.

A typical and the most famous participant-observer research project is the two-year study by Donald Graves (in Gentry, 1980a). In the Graves project, children were observed before, during, and after writing episodes, and the researchers kept detailed records of the students' writing process. Some of the writing episodes were also videotaped. During videotaping, the student writer wore a small microphone so that the researchers could capture any vocal or sub-vocal behavior. Narratives reporting the behavior of the young writers in the Graves project provide a rich source of data on the composing process.

Quasi-Product Studies

Quasi-product studies provide information about one element of the composing process: revising activities. Typically, subjects compose on a topic during the first session, making changes in their text on that day; the essays are collected, photocopied, and analyzed. At the next session, the compositions are returned to the writers, who revise by marking on their original drafts; then they compose a second draft. Both drafts are collected (e.g., Faigley & Witte, 1981). Drafts are analyzed for changes to determine, for example, (1) whether the writers decided to add new information to the text or to remove old information and (2) where and why they made these changes (e.g., Bridwell, 1980; Faigley & Witte, 1981).

In consonance with case studies, these projects may compare capable and remedial or novice writers (Faigley & Witte, 1981; Sommers, 1980) and elicit or infer information about their thinking processes (e.g., Beach, 1981; Bridwell, 1980; Sommers, 1980); usually few subjects are studied (e.g., Faigley & Witte, 1981; Sommers, 1980), and the subjects are generally older students and adults (e.g., Bridwell, 1980; Faigley &

Witte, 1981; Sommers, 1980). In contrast with case studies, the product is analyzed rather than observations and/or protocols of the writers (e.g., Bridwell, 1980).

Unique Procedures

Occasionally, a somewhat unique procedure is used to investigate a particular facet of the composing process. One such technique is "blind writing," which is implemented to study what happens when the writer is unable to read the text that he or she is composing. In one study, the subjects composed on special paper that does not take an imprint on the first page, only on the carbon copy (Atwell, 1981). In another study, the subjects composed with a wooden stylus so that an imprint appears only on the carbon copy of the draft (Gould, 1980). In a third study, subjects used invisible ink (Hull, Arnowitz, & Smith, 1981). Consequently, only the researcher can read what is written.

Another unique procedure involves the use of an electroencephalograph to scan the activity of the left and right hemispheres of the writer's brain as he or she composes (Glassner, 1980). During scanning, the device also provides timing information on when the activity levels of the hemispheres vary. The right brain is active when a person is processing spatial, global concepts; the left brain is active when the person is processing linearly. A baseline rate is first established by recording five minutes of hemispheric activity with the subject's eyes closed and five minutes with the subject's eyes open. Then the subject composes with electrodes attached to the right and left temporal lobes.

The laboratory case studies, naturalistic studies, quasi-product studies, and unique procedures have begun to produce some results. These results have already modified the established, scholarly view of the composing process.

RESULTS

Information derived from projects using the new methodologies to study writing has discredited the

linear model of the composing process--prewriting, writing, and postwriting--as an appropriate model for research purposes.* The linear model is inappropriate for research purposes because it describes "the growth of the written product, not . . . the inner process of the person producing the product" (Flower & Hayes, 1981b, p. 369).

As a process, writing does not move in a straight line from conception to completion: All planning is not done before words are put on paper; all the words are not on paper before writers review and revise. Writers move back and forth among these subprocesses. For example, after text has been composed on paper, the writer may notice a gap for which new content must be planned.

Although researchers variously describe the recursive subprocesses of composing (e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981a: planning, translating, reviewing; Nold, 1979b: planning transcribing, reviewing; Gould, 1980: planning, generating, reviewing, accessing other information), the results of the research on composing are described in this paper under these subprocess headings: planning, translating, reviewing, and revising.** After a detailed account of each subprocess is presented, the research results are summarized.

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*For pedagogical purposes, however, the linear model is still viable because the activities of each subprocess are more easily presented in separate stages. For example, teaching students to reorder text is easier when a completed text is available to cut and paste.

**Choice of these labels does not imply disagreement with any researcher's categories. Rather, this division represents a practical organization for discussing what is now known about the process of composing written discourse.

Planning

Research reveals that planning is a thinking process that writers engage in throughout composing--before, during, and after the time spent in putting words on a page. During planning, "writers form an internal representation of knowledge that will be used in writing" (Flower & Hayes, 1981a, p. 372). More research results are available on planning than on any other subprocess of composing. The research focuses on (1) the elements of planning, (2) the time spent in planning, (3) the kinds of planning done before and during composing, and (4) the differences between competent and remedial writers' planning activities.

Planning elements include generating and organizing content, and setting goals (Flower & Hayes, 1981a). Generating entails gathering information to write about, whether that information is material from external sources or is content discovered within the writer's mind.

Organizing is ordering content; it contributes structure to a final product. Organizing may involve deleting content when more content has been generated than is needed for the specific purpose and/or arrangement. In actual practice, plans for organizing content rarely include formal outlines (Emig, 1971; Mischel, 1974; Stallard, 1974).

Setting goals involves mentally planning the individual en-route tactics for completing the writing task. Writers may set a number of such goals while developing a complete discourse. Protocols show that goals may be as complex as "Conform to the rules of a genre," as specific as "I'll include an illustration," or as simple as "Write down what I can remember" (Flower & Hayes, 1980b, p. 18).

Writers set two kinds of goals: content goals that govern what to say (e.g., "I'll describe the character"), and process goals that direct the writer's own behavior (e.g., "I think I'll review that part") (Flower & Hayes, 1981a). Some goals specify both content and process, such as "I want to open with a

statement about political views" (Flower & Hayes, 1981a, p. 377). The boundaries of a goal are evidenced in a writer's protocol when he or she describes the starting point of the goal, e.g., "Write an introduction" (Flower & Hayes, 1981a, p. 377), and evaluates the success or completeness of the goal, e.g., "That's banal--that's awful" (p. 378).

The quantity and quality of goals that are set differentiate good and poor writers (Flower & Hayes, 1980a). Good writers create a rich and elaborate network of goals and subgoals that help them generate content, while poor writers concern themselves with statements about the subject (Flower & Hayes, 1981b).

In addition to setting goals and to generating and organizing content, planning includes such diverse "prewriting" or rehearsal activities as making notes about the topic, drawing (Graves & Murray, 1980) and eating or waiting for a bus (Perl, 1979) while ideas incubate. When researchers measure prewriting activities as indicators of planning time, they find that writers do little of their planning before they translate mental images into words on a page (e.g., Emig, 1971; Mischel, 1974; Perl, 1979; Pianko, 1979). In one study comparing prewriting time and total writing time for high school students, researchers found that subjects spent only one to four minutes of their composing time in prewriting planning (Stallard, 1974). In a study with college students, subjects spent only about four minutes in planning during the prewriting period (Perl, 1979).

These results on planning time as measured during the prewriting period contrast sharply with findings from other studies that suggest planning time is a constant high proportion of total composing time (e.g., Berkenkotter, 1982; Gould, 1980). In these latter studies, planning required more time than any other subprocess (i.e., translating, reviewing, and revising); planning may consume as much as 65% (Gould, 1980) to 85% (Berkenkotter, 1982) of total composing time. These latter studies have high totals for planning time because they count not just the time spent in planning during the prewriting period, but also the time spent on planning as composing progresses.

Differences are evident between before-writing and during-writing planning. Before words are put on the page, planning usually entails setting some general parameters. This global planning also occurs during translating (i.e., putting mental images into words on a page) when writers additionally make paragraph-, sentence-, and word-level decisions (e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981b; Pianko, 1979). Most in-process planning (as well as some prewriting planning) is mental (Pianko, 1979), when writers do significant amounts of such unrehearsed, in-process planning, they evidence "great right hemisphere" activity (Glassner, 1980, p. 87).

These in-process planning activities, either global or local, usually occur when writers pause (Flower & Hayes, 1981b). Consequently, research on the pause phenomenon provides considerable data on planning. Pause research reveals that short pauses occur when writers are planning their next words or phrases (Matsuhashi, 1981); longer pauses transpire when writers are planning sentences (Matsuhashi, 1981) and global elements (Flower & Hayes, 1981b).

Pause research also suggests that planning time may vary according to the purpose of the discourse: Generalizing and persuading have been shown to require more planning time than reporting (Matsuhashi, 1981). This same study has shown that planning highly abstract sentences (superordinates) requires more time than planning sentences that add supporting details (subordinates). The opposite is true for individual lexical items: Writers pause for less time before superordinate (general) terms than before subordinate (specific) terms (Matsuhashi, 1981). Writers also pause longer to plan predicates than to plan modifiers, which appear to pour out in a rapid string (Matsuhashi, 1982), and they pause most frequently before conjunctions (Caufer, 1982).

The importance of extensive planning is supported by reports that good writers spend more time in planning than either average or remedial writers (e.g., Stallard, 1974). Good writers appear also to spend more time in global planning than in local, sentence- and word-level planning; the opposite appears true for

remedial writers--they spend more time in local planning (e.g., Atwell, 1981).

These findings are corroborated by pause research, which reveals that good writers spend more time in long planning pauses, while remedial writers pause for shorter time periods (Flower & Hayes, 1981b; Van Bruggen, 1946). Additionally, good writers pause more before they write in thought units (i.e., episodes devoted to communicating concepts or carrying out goals), while remedial writers pause more before sentence-level tasks (Atwell, 1981; Flower & Hayes, 1981b; Van Bruggen, 1946).

Translating

Terms other than "translating" have been used to label this component of the composing process; these synonyms are cited here because they help define this subprocess. The terms include "writing," "recording," "implementing," "drafting," "articulating," and "transcribing." The term "translating" was selected from the various options as an appropriate label here for the process of transforming meaning from one form of symbolization (thought) into another form of symbolization (graphic representation).

Discussions of research results on translating most frequently deal with the need to make translating skills automatic and with the difference that this "automaticity" makes in writers' ability to focus their attention on global issues rather than on word-level problems during composing.

Translating makes huge demands on writers' cognitive processes because translating is so complex: Writers must put ideas into written language while they are also dealing with problems of discourse coherence and structure:

> Even a casual analysis makes it clear that the number of things that must be dealt with simultaneously is stupendous: handwriting, spelling, punctuation, word choice, syntax, textual connections, purpose, organization,

> clarity, rhythm, euphony, the possible reactions of various possible readers, and so on. To pay conscious attention to all of these would overload the information processing capacity of the most towering intellects. (Scardamalia, in Bereiter, 1979, p. 152)

This mental load imposed on translating becomes lighter as an increasing number of writing skills become automatic rather than consciously driven. "As writers become more sophisticated, they may devote less conscious attention to such concerns as orthography, spelling, and basic sentence construction" (Bridwell, 1981a, p. 96).

Being able to "devote less conscious attention" to the skills of translating requires years of practice with handwriting, spelling, language usage, word choice, capitalization, and punctuation; then these skills may become somewhat automatic. Relative automaticity may also be possible for some higher-level skills such as sentence variation and figures of speech (Gould, 1980).

Studies have provided evidence that when skills become automatic, differences appear in the writing process during translating. In one study (Glassner, 1980), marked changes in cognitive processes were measured when writers engaged in a type of automatic translating. The design for this study allowed the subjects to select their topics for writing. Some subjects chose familiar topics that did not pose either global or local planning challenges because the subjects had rehearsed the topic, either mentally or in spoken discourse, until they could compose without consciously attending to such aspects as order or word choice or sentence structure. Under these conditions, an electroencephalograph measured higher levels of activity in writers' left brains than in their right brains. Interviews with the subjects verified the automatic nature of their writing at the time of their heavier left-brain activity. One writer, who wrote about an automobile accident she had been involved in, reported,

> I knew the words that I would say as I have said them before to insurance investigators, lawyers, my family, and friends. It was as if a record was in my head that kept repeating itself. (Glassner, 1980, p. 88)

Another study (Van Bruggen, 1946) evidenced a difference in translating speed when skills were more nearly automatic. In this study, subjects who had mastered translating skills, as measured by high scores on usage tests, wrote at a rapid rate between pauses. Conversely, subjects who had not mastered translating skills wrote slowly. Furthermore, the speed of translating between pauses increased with the increasing age of the subjects, a finding that supports the assumption that older writers are likely to have made more translating skills automatic than have their younger counterparts.

In an apparent, but not real, contradiction of these results, some researchers have discovered that good writers write almost half as many words per minute as their randomly chosen counterparts (Flower & Hayes, 1981b). The reason for this apparent discrepancy is that the data is based on the ratio of total words to total composing time. Since good writers pause for a long time to plan between episodes of rapid translating, they may write fewer total words. Poor writers, however, pause for shorter intervals during translating. One reason for their frequent, short pauses is that they must stop to think about the mechanics of writing. They have so many mechanical problems that they must "attend to surface matters [in order] to write out their ideas the first time" (Bridwell, 1980, p. 214).

Interestingly, subjects who have difficulty with skills used in translating often evidence oral mastery of them. Their skill mastery is verified by studies that compare transcripts of oral composing with the subjects' written products. These protocols reveal both what subjects <u>say</u> they are writing and what they actually do write; they use skills in their oral composing that are not reflected in their written compositions. For example, a subject might say he or she

is writing "walked," but the word he or she actually writes is "walk" (Perl, 1979).

Reviewing

Reviewing is characterized by backward movements to read and assess "whether or not the words on the page capture the original sense intended" (Perl, 1979, p. 331). It includes scanning to determine where one is in relation to the discourse plan and to refamiliarize oneself with the already translated text; it also includes judging whether to do further planning and translating or to stop writing because the discourse is complete. Writers also review their texts to proofread for the conventions of written language, to decide on a conclusion, and to determine needed revisions (Pianko, 1979).

Reviewing may be intentional or spontaneous (Gentry, 1980b). Some writers review after every few phrases; however, writers more frequently review after they have composed a group of sentences. These "chunks" of information are then reviewed as a piece of discourse (Perl, 1979).

Studies have shown that most writers review, whatever their level of expertise (e.g., Atwell, 1981; Pianko, 1979). Even young writers spend some of their composing time in reviewing their texts (Graves & Murray, 1980).

Most research findings on reviewing deal with the differences between capable and remedial writers. This research shows that when poor writers review, they often do not rethink their compositions as competent writers do. Furthermore, remedial writers do not review much for elements of style, purpose, and audience. Rather, remedial writers frequently review for errors (Pianko, 1979).

When remedial writers review for errors, they are often ineffective because they do not notice their errors; they often read what they intended to write rather than what they actually did write (Daiute, 1981). Protocols that include transcripts of subjects

reading their compositions aloud expose this miscue behavior. For example, a subject may read aloud words that are not actually in the composition (Perl, 1979).

Studies suggest that capable writers may review their texts more often than remedial writers do (e.g., Atwell, 1981; Stallard, 1974), yet remedial writers appear more dependent upon reviewing. This dependency is evidenced in Atwell's (1981) research, which included a blind-reading condition. This research discloses that remedial writers stray further from the text than do traditional writers (i.e., both good and average writers) when they cannot review. Under blind-reading conditions, the traditional students maintained their high degrees of textual coherence, while the remedial writers wrote somewhat less coherent texts. Atwell explains that the difference occurred because her remedial writers did not have a clear mental plan. "They were, indeed, text-bound and needed to read their texts in order to keep the process moving. In contrast, traditional writers . . . could rely on mental text to keep the composing process recursive and stable" (p. 9). However, even traditional writers deviated slightly from their original plans when they could not review.

Revising

Definitions for revising have suffered from the linear model of writing that portrays revising as ". . . what the writer does after a draft is completed" (Murray, 1978, p. 87). However, revising is not merely the last stage in a process. Rather, it is a cognitive and physical activity that occurs "continually throughout the writing of a work" (Sommers, 1980, p. 380).

Thus revising is comprised of behavior that entails changing one's mind as well as changing the text. According to Nold (1979a),

> Revising . . . is . . . (1) changing the meaning of the text in response to a realization that the original intended meaning is somehow faulty or false or weak . . ., (2) adding or substituting meaning to clarify the

> originally intended meaning or to follow more closely the intended form or genre of the text . . ., (3) making grammatical sentences more readable by deleting, reordering and restating . . ., as well as (4) correcting errors of diction, transcription and syntax that nearly obscure intended meaning or that are otherwise unacceptable in the grapholect. (pp. 105-106)

Thus revising covers editing tasks (e.g., fixing spelling and punctuation, substituting synonyms) as well as major reformulations (e.g., reorganizing blocks of discourse, adding whole sections of content). These changes are made when the writer, in reviewing the text, sees mismatches between his/her intention and the actual product. This dissonance between intention and actualization creates tension that must be resolved by revising the text (Della-Piana, 1978; Sommers, 1980). Since the writer reviews throughout composing, he or she also encounters revision-inducing dissonance throughout the process.

Revising is the most accessible component of the composing process; it "provides a window into the cognitive operations which occur when a writer writes" (Bridwell, 1980, p. 220). Surprising then is the paucity of research on revising. The most significant studies on revising have been completed by only a few researchers: Beach (1976), Bridwell (1980), Faigley & Witte (1981), Sommers (1980), and Stallard (1974). Most of the research deals with (1) when subjects revise, (2) what kinds of revisions they make, and (3) what differences occur among writers who have varying levels of expertise.

Research has revealed that writers often make more revisions while writing the first draft than they make on the draft after it is completed (e.g., Bridwell, 1980; Faigley & Witte, 1981). Writers also make many changes in subsequent drafts.

Unfortunately, first-draft revisions are often premature editing attempts, sometimes by good writers (Stallard, 1974), but more often by writers who are

overly concerned with the surface features of composing (e.g., punctuation, spelling, word choice). Consequently, their concern about surface features causes these writers to interrupt the flow of composing (Perl, 1979). Correspondingly, they don't use important operations like reorganization and addition (Sommers, 1980). Rather, they try to "clean up speech" (p. 381), so they approach revision with a "thesaurus philosophy of writing" (p. 381).

Often, however, concern with surface features reflects the developmental level of the writer, for a developmental difference in the ability to revise is indicated by the research (Bridwell, 1980). Young writers are at first reluctant to mar a page of writing for any kind of change. When they overcome this resistance, they begin to see the draft as temporary. The young writer then gradually extends his/her revision skills (Calkins, in Gentry, 1980a). Even choosing one topic while excluding others is an effective developmental step in acquiring mature revising strategies (Graves & Murray, 1980).

As writers become more experienced and competent, they view revising as a process of structuring and shaping their discourse (e.g., Sommers, 1979; Stallard, 1974). They begin to see a first draft as an attempt to "define the territory" (Sommers, 1980, p. 384), so they keep writing that first draft until they decide what they want it to say. As writers develop, they also become concerned with audience considerations, so they start reviewing and thus revising their work for its effect on their audience (Sommers, 1980). The differences between mature and developing writers are supported by one study that examined differences between the kinds of revisions made by students and experienced writers. Students made more word- and phrase-level changes than did the adults. Adults, however, made more sentence-level and theme-level changes (Sommers, 1980).

In another study (Faigley & Witte, 1981), developmental differences in writers' revising strategies were examined across three groups: inexperienced student writers, advanced student writers, and expert adults.

inexperienced students primarily corrected errors and made meaning-preserving changes of the synonym-substitution type. Advanced student writers also made many meaning-preserving changes, both substitutions and deletions; however, they also made many changes affecting the meaning in the first and second drafts. Expert adults made few corrections, a substantial number of meaning-preserving changes, and more changes in meaning than either group of students.

High school students' view of revision appears similar to that of inexperienced college writers: surface and word-level revisions accounted for over half their revisions in one study (Bridwell, 1980). Results divided the poor writers into two distinct groups--those who revised extensively for surface-level changes, and those who merely recopied their first drafts.

Summary

The composing-process research has demonstrated that planning occurs throughout composing. During planning, writers set composing goals and generate and organize their ideas. Planning consumes a high proportion of composing time, but writers plan only for brief periods before they start translating their ideas on paper. This planning that occurs before translating defines some general parameters, while in-process planning entails global as well as paragraph-, sentence-, and word-level decisions. When writers pause, they are usually planning, and the length of their pauses corresponds with the type of planning that is engaging them. Because it is such a significant element of the composing process, differences in planning behavior separate good from poor writers, with good writers spending not only more time in overall planning than poor writers do, but also more time in global rather than local planning.

Translating, which is synonymous with terms like "drafting" and "articulating," is the subprocess of transforming thought into its graphic representation. Writers deal with a heavy mental load during translating. Consequently, writers translate more easily as

the requisite skills become more nearly automatic. Correspondingly, writers for whom these skills have become somewhat automatic can translate relatively rapidly and can also devote more conscious attention to global issues during composing.

Reviewing occurs throughout the composing of a piece of discourse. Writers review their texts to appraise what has been done and what needs to be done. Good writers review to rethink their texts and to attend to elements of style, purpose, and audience. Poor writers, who are more dependent on reviewing, search for errors. Yet these same writers often miss errors because they read into the text what they intended to write rather than what they actually did write.

Revising is behavior that entails changing one's mind about the content and structure of the discourse as well as changing the actual, translated text. This subprocess covers a range of behavior from simple editing to substantially reformulating whole texts, and these behaviors occur before, during, and after composing a draft. Writers evidence developmental differences in the ability to revise. In early stages of development, they concentrate on correcting errors and changing surface features in their texts. As they mature, writers progressively concentrate on restructuring and shaping their discourse, redefining their ideas as they compose, and adjusting their writing to meet their audience's needs.

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Much important information has been derived from a small body of research because new methodologies for investigating the composing process produced results not attainable by older, more traditional strategies. However, even researchers within the field express uneasiness about the validity of the overall designs of the new research. Criticism has also been leveled at specific features of the designs and the concomitant assumptions that are made.

Proponents of the naturalistic method challenge results from both classical research and laboratory case studies because the designs of these methods do not consider the context for writing; researchers provide no descriptions of contexts and assume that writing in a laboratory and writing in a naturalistic setting are similar (Edelsberg, 1981; Emig, 1982). Both naturalistic-study proponents and case-study people are skeptical about the product-examination designs of researchers who investigate revising; they contend that researchers cannot make assumptions about the process by counting features in the product.

Numerous specific features and assumptions of the new research are also challenged. One such feature is the occasional disregard for situational variables such as the purpose for the task and writers' familiarity with the task, subject, and audience; processes vary significantly "with changes in assignment, context, audience, and purpose for writing" (Bridwell, 1980, p. 218). A related concern is that the researchers rather than the writers often select the writing task. Under this circumstance, writers deal with a process different from the one implemented to transform "experience [into] self-chosen writing problems" (Newkirk, 1982, p. 86). Furthermore, the writing is often timed, yet timing constraints do not allow subjects to become involved and committed to the writing task; subjects need time to plan and develop their ideas and to shape the structure of their texts.

Many critics have reservations about the subjects in the studies. The sample population is frequently too small to allow generalizable conclusions; yet they are made. Additionally, the subjects in most studies are high school seniors, college students, and adults; few studies deal with younger writers, but the processes of young and mature writers are obviously different. Furthermore, the validity of subjects' responses during their interviews is questionable: Writers may not accurately report on their current practices because of individual sensitivity; they may not remember well enough to answer questions about past writing behavior; they may tell the investigator what they think he or she wants to hear. Finally, economic

status, ethnicity, and mental age are not discussed as influential; however, these factors should be part of the data on the subjects (Gentry, 1980a).

The strongest criticism, however, is directed toward the oral-composing feature in many studies. Writing situations that require subjects to compose aloud for an audience (either an investigator or a tape recoder) are unnatural, despite reassurances by one professional writer that the composer quickly becomes at ease (Murray, 1982). The requirement places additional demands on the writing and distorts the process--it transforms the writing process into a different process, a hybrid of writing and speaking. Furthermore, many writing activities occur simultaneously, from "unconscious processes such as ordering the words in a noun phrase to conscious processes . . . [such as] planning and monitoring" (Faigley & Witte, 1981, p. 412). Much goes on that writers cannot verbalize. Finally, researchers implement a selection process when they search for subjects who can do adequate oral reporting while composing. This selection factor alone distorts the research results because the sample population is not random.

These seemingly overwhelming criticisms make one wonder: Was it all for naught? However, the new methodologies, despite their limitations, have produced important information. Without this body of research, little would be known about the composing process. If all that the methodology accomplished was to focus some of the researchers' attention toward the process and away from the product of writing, the research would be successful.

But it has accomplished much more. It has verified what most competent writers know intuitively about the recursiveness of the process and about the subprocesses of composing. It has pointed out patterns that have credibility because they appear consistently across studies. One important pattern shows that the composing process of successful writers is different from that of poor writers. Successful writers plan more and at a higher level. They review for global

aspects of discourse and work more on these higher-level elements when they revise. Thus the research also provides information for teachers of writing: To help more writers become successful writers, writing instructors must guide writers toward becoming higher-level planners, reviewers, and revisers.

To help all writers become good writers, researchers from many methodologies must continue to investigate the composing process, for only by using a variety of techniques can researchers explore the various facets of this complex behavior. The potential is tremendous. We already know so much more than we did nearly twenty years ago when, in 1963, Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer made the often quoted statement comparing research on composition to "chemical research as it emerged from the period of alchemy" (p. 5). We researchers and teachers are not alchemists any longer, but we still believe that maybe we can discover that formula for producing gold.

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WRITING FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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Writing is the most advanced and the most difficult of all the language skills. Even native speakers of English acquire proficiency in this skill only through conscious learning and laborious practice. While all normal elementary school children can communicate fairly well in oral English, not all high school students can write well in English. This is evidenced by the recent establishment of writing proficiency requirements for graduation from high school. Assessment projects have also substantiated the common suspicion that most people are not proficient writers (Humes, 1980). If writing is difficult for native speakers of English, it must be more so for speakers of other languages. An examination of the nature and process of writing can help identify the problems encountered by speakers of other languages learning to write in English and can help map out instructional strategies and techniques to enable them to acquire writing proficiency.

THE NATURE AND PROCESS OF WRITING

On the surface, writing seems to be simply a process of encoding speech into graphic symbols. The many similarities between speaking and writing have led some people to believe that once we know the spoken language and the system of encoding speech into written symbols, we can write well in that language. However, there are important differences between speech and writing, and proficiency in one skill does not necessarily bring about proficiency in the other.

Speech takes place within a specific situation. It is normally a social process carried out in the presence of other people and sustained through interaction and feedback, both verbal and non-verbal. Writing, by contrast, is a solitary activity. Since the person we are addressing is not present, there cannot be any interaction between writer and reader. Therefore, we have to rely entirely on our own efforts to sustain the whole process of communication through the manipulation of words alone. Both spoken and written forms draw on the same linguistic resources, but the extent to which they draw on some resources rather than on others depends largely on the nature of each mode of communication. Thus, certain types of sentence structure, certain lexical items, and certain linking devices are more typical of writing than of speech.

Even a cursory examination of a text will reveal that written communication has two basic components: thought and language. Thought is what the writer wants to convey to the reader, and language is the visible expression of the message. By using language, we translate thoughts into words, which are then combined into sentences. Writing, however, is not simply producing a number of unrelated sentences. We produce a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways to form a paragraph. Paragraphs, in turn, are organized into a coherent whole called a text. The arrangement of ideas and language forms involves much more than linguistic competence, which, for native speakers of English, mostly functions on the unconscious level. It also involves a thought process that requires some conscious mental effort.

The skills of making choices about content, organization, words, and structures and of weaving sentences and paragraphs together into a unified whole require both the ability to manipulate language materials and structures and the ability to think clearly and logically. In her survey of research in English composition, Zamel (1976, p. 73) concludes that "syntax and rhetoric are complementary yet separate

aspects of the writing process, neither one being responsible for improvement of the other."

What, then, actually happens when we write a text in English? There are a variety of theories on the process of writing, with different numbers of stages and different labels for these stages. Some authors believe that there are only two stages. Elbow (1973) describes the first stage as the one in which the writer figures out meaning and the second stage as the one in which the writer puts meaning into language. Nold (1979) calls the first stage composing and the second stage revising. Obviously, the stages described by these authors are not the same. Other writers distinguish three stages in the process of writing. Applebee (1979) identifies these as pre-writing, writing, and editing. Rohman (1965) calls them pre-writing, writing, and rewriting. Murray (1978) labels them prevision, vision, and revision. Britton (1978) describes them as preparation, incubation, and articulation. A few authorities see four different stages in the process of writing. Legum and Krashen (1972), for example, call those stages conceptualization, planning, writing, and editing. Finally, a five-stage process is advocated by Draper (1979), who distinguishes pre-writing, formulation, transcribing, reformulation, and editing. (See Humes, 1980, for additional discussion of these stage models.)

Most of the authors mentioned above described writing as a linear activity. By contrast, Flower and Hayes (1980a) introduced a non-linear model which, according to Humes (1980), reflects the inner process of the writer. The Flower and Hayes model consists of three major units: The Task Environment, the Writer's Long-Term Memory, and the Composing Process itself. The Task Environment consists of topic, audience, and exigency on the one side and the growing text itself on the other.

> The Long-Term Memory is a storehouse of knowledge that enables writers to solve the rhetorical problem during composing. The Composing Process . . . consists of Planning, Translating, and Reviewing. Planning

> includes Generating, Organizing, and Setting Goals. Translating "is essentially the process of putting ideas into visible language" (Flower & Hayes, 1980b, p. 11). Reviewing . . . includes editing and evaluating as sub-processes. (Humes, 1980, p. 7)

Humes (1980) believes that the Flower-Hayes model is valuable for the task of devising instruction models.

Although authorities on writing do not agree on the number of stages in the process of writing and the labels for these stages, they all mention certain activities that we must carry out in writing. These are the generating of ideas whose stimulus may come from the outside world or from the inner world of feelings, emotions, and memory of past experience, the translation of ideas into words and sentences, the organization of words and sentences into a unified and coherent text, and the improvement of the text once it has been produced to make it more effective. Those activities can occur during any stage of the writing process; however, each will be more predominant in one stage than in the others. Most of the generating of ideas, for example, takes place before the stage of actual writing, although while writing we usually generate more ideas arising from what has been written. The translation of ideas into language and the organization of language elements into a unified and coherent text mainly occur during the stage of actual writing. Revision and editing activities essentially take place when a text has been produced, but the improvement of a word or a sentence also occurs during the stage of actual writing.

WRITING PROBLEMS FOR ESOL STUDENTS*

So far, we have looked at writing in general, without any distinction between writing English as a first language or writing English as a foreign or second language. As a matter of fact, the nature and

*The term ESOL denotes speakers of other languages learning English as a foreign language (EFL) or as a second language (ESL).

the process of writing remains the same for writers of English of any language background. However, important differences exist in the learning situation because of the difference in the cultural and linguistic background of the learners. Most American children learn to write at school between the ages of five and seven. By this time they have acquired a fairly well-developed command of the spoken language. The range of vocabulary may still be limited, but the essential language structures have been mastered. By contrast, learners who are not native speakers of English may not have reached this level of proficiency in oral language skills when they start learning to write in English. The amount of language that they have at their disposal may be very limited. On the other hand, unless they are very young, most ESOL students will already be familiar with writing in their own language and will have acquired certain language and thought habits that are peculiar to their own culture and that will interfere with learning to write in English.

Writing is a difficult task, and writing in a language that is not one's native language is still more difficult. The problems stem not only from differences in words and symbols but also from the choice of words, the combination of words into a sentence, and the arrangement of sentences into a unified and coherent paragraph. The words and word groups of one language do not fit together in the same way as the words of another language do. Furthermore, ideas do not fit together in the same way from language to language.

Words

On the word level, writing skills include the ability to spell and the ability to use the word that accurately conveys the meaning intended by the writer. For ESOL students who use a writing system other than the Roman alphabet, one problem is the mastery of a new alphabet. Students who use the Roman alphabet in their native language still have problems because different writing systems often assign different phonetic values to the same letter or group of letters. Moreover, because of the complex relationship between sounds and

symbols in English, spelling is a major problem for ESOL students. The only consolation for ESOL students is that spelling is also a major problem for native speakers of English. Although complex, the relationship between English pronunciation and spelling is by no means unsystematic. Therefore, much help can be given to ESOL students through guidance in key areas based on the recurrence of patterns.

In learning a new language, we learn not only new sounds, new forms, and new ways of arranging linguistic forms, but also new meanings. This is because different cultures analyze and organize the universe of experience in different ways. These differences are reflected in the meaning of words. In English, the meaning of the word "hair," for instance, includes the hair on the head, on other parts of the human body, and on animals, but excludes the feathers on birds. In Vietnamese, the hair on the head, called "tóc," is differentiated from the hair on other parts of the human body, called "lông"; but the meaning of "lông" includes the hair on animals and the feathers on birds. A word in a given language can be generic while in another language, it can be very specific. Thus, a single word in one language can correspond to several distinct words in another language. The ESOL student whose native language prefers generic terms will have difficulty in learning English vocabulary that tends to be more specific. Lado (1966) points out that in dealing with vocabulary we should take into account three important aspects of words: their forms, their meanings, and their distributions. These aspects are different in different languages. Out of these differences arise vocabulary difficulties that constitute teaching and learning problems. Vocabulary and meaning are the most neglected areas in ESOL methodology, which usually gives priority to pronunciation and grammatical structures. Good writing, however, depends on adequate vocabulary resources as well as grammatical competence.

Sentences

On the sentence level, writing skills consist of the ability to manipulate morphological and syntactical structures as well as punctuation. Punctuation is

particularly difficult for those students who do not use the Roman alphabet in their own writing system. Even those who are familiar with the Roman alphabet experience difficulties, for punctuation in English does not follow the same patterns as in other languages. Since morphological and syntactical structures vary from one language to another, sentence-level problems encountered by ESOL students vary according to their language backgrounds. Speakers of isolating languages, for instance, experience more difficulty with English inflected forms than speakers of inflectional languages. Contrastive analysis of morphological and syntactical structures of English and other languages would help identify learning problems of ESOL students on the level of the sentence.

Paragraphs

On the paragraph level, speakers of different languages tend to arrange their ideas on the same subject in quite different ways. These differences exist because each culture has its own special way of thinking. How a person thinks largely determines how he or she writes. Most literature on ESOL stresses differences in grammatical structures in various languages, but few authorities consider the differences in the thinking process and in logic, which form the basis for writing. Kaplan (1980) made an interesting study of the thought process behind the paragraphs written by native speakers of English and by speakers of other languages. He contended that foreign students who have mastered the syntactic structures of English are still unable to write adequate compositions because they employ a rhetoric and a sequence of thought that violate the expectations of the native speaker of English.

According to Kaplan, the basic feature of the English paragraph is that it normally follows a straight line of development. It often begins with a statement of its central idea (known as the topic sentence), followed by a series of subdivisions of this central idea. In contrast, paragraph development in the Semitic languages "is based on a complex series of parallel constructions, both positive and negative" (Kaplan, 1980, p. 403). This kind of parallelism seems

to be archaic and awkward to a native speaker of English. Oriental writing, on the other hand, is marked by an indirect approach. In this kind of writing, the development of the paragraph may be said to be "'turning in a widening gyre.' The . . . gyres turn around the subject and show it from a variety of tangential views, but the subject is never looked at directly" (p. 406). Such paragraph development "would strike the English reader as awkward and unnecessarily indirect" (p. 406). Paragraph development in a Romance language is characterized by digression. The writer introduces extraneous material that "really does not seem to contribute significant structural material to the basic thought of the paragraph" (p. 407). In the opinion of Henderson (1982), Greek paragraph development puts more emphasis on free association of ideas as contrasted with the English paragraph, which is built on the topic-sentence technique.

In paragraph development, ESOL students base their writing on rhetorical patterns that have been established long before they started learning English. As a result, they encounter difficulties in paragraph development not normally encountered by native speakers of English. In order to write English well, ESOL students should first understand how English speakers usually arrange their ideas. Consequently, teaching English composition should include the teaching of English logic and rhetoric. Kaplan believes that one way to help ESOL students write good English texts is to teach them contrastive rhetoric in the same sense that contrastive grammar is taught.

TEACHING WRITING TO ESOL STUDENTS

In the field of ESOL teaching, writing does not receive the same attention given to other language skills. Since the inception of the audio-lingual movement, oral skills have been greatly emphasized and writing has been considered the least important of the language skills. However, significant changes have taken place. Although oral proficiency is still accorded priority, there is no longer any strong conviction that learners should spend a long time mastering the spoken form of the language before being

exposed to its written form. Reading and writing have gained more importance in ESOL programs. Chastain (1976) believes that the teaching of writing should start early in the learning process because writing helps to solidify the student's grasp of vocabulary and structure and to reinforce the other language skills.

Various approaches to teaching writing to ESOL students have been developed. In the main, they can be classified under the "quantity" or "quality" school of thought. Representing the "quantity" school, Briere (1966) advocates getting students to write as much as possible, even if they make a large number of mistakes; but mistakes must not be corrected. Erazmus (1960), another proponent of the "quantity" approach, believes that students should be taught rapid writing with no revision or re-writing. However, studies in English composition (Dressel, Schmid, & Kincaid, 1952; Hunting, 1967) indicate that one does not learn to write merely by writing and that frequent writing without proper instruction may even be detrimental. The "quality" school, by contrast, favors a step-by-step mastery of the various skills involved in learning to write. The students are asked to perform grammatical exercises, controlled tasks, and manipulations before they are allowed to attempt paragraphs of their own invention.

Various materials now exist for practicing writing within a controlled and guided framework (Baskoff, 1971; Hill, 1978; Kunz, 1972; Paulston & Dykstra, 1973; Spencer, 1965). Many of the exercises are totally manipulative. Students make changes in paragraphs in the same way that they practice substitution drills. Some textbooks attempt to allow the learner to contribute to the text in some way by using completion exercises (Moody, 1981). Paulston (1972) believes that the most important theoretical justification for using controlled composition "lies in the realm of motivation" (p. 38).

Recent texts attempt to construct rhetorical frames for guided writing (Arapoff, 1970; Lawrence, 1972; Paulston & Bruder, 1976). The student is asked to examine a paragraph, work on pages of related exercises, and then write on the same topic as the

model or on some related topic. Another feature of many approaches to controlled writing is the attempt to isolate the various skills involved in the production of a text and present these gradually to the learner in a systematic way. Humes (1979) lists 185 different skills classified under five different categories. Alexander (1971) advocates a scheme to take the learner from the writing of simple sentences to free composition in six stages. Bander (1978) concentrates on both grammatical and rhetorical structures and advocates the integration of reading and writing skills.

The sequence of classroom activities necessary to develop writing skills parallels that of speaking. Students must first gain a certain degree of control over the underlying language competence before they can begin to develop the performance skill of writing a coherent text. Unless students are led, step by step, through activities of increasing levels of difficulty, they cannot be expected to have an active command of the material. However, teaching writing to ESOL students differs from teaching writing to native speakers of English because of the differences in linguistic equipment and thought processes of the learners.

Words and Sentences

Training in writing for ESOL students begins at the level of words and sentences. Before students are able to write good paragraphs they must be able to write acceptable sentences; that is, they should have acquired a corpus of necessary vocabulary and should have mastered basic grammatical structures. On the level of the written word, the first step is to develop the students' spelling ability. At the beginning stage, copying can be used as a technique to teach spelling and reinforce sentence structure. Copying should not become a meaningless, mechanical, boring activity. Students can be asked to rearrange scrambled words, make a list of words that go together, or put a list of words in alphabetical order while copying.

Dictation is another technique that can be used on this level to teach spelling and punctuation, to reinforce students' ability to recognize the relationship

between sounds and symbols, and to develop their ability to produce grammatical forms. At this stage, dictation should be based only on materials already studied in speaking and reading activities. Later, familiar vocabulary in new contexts or even unfamiliar materials can be included. Dictation has been found to be an effective device in teaching writing to ESOL students at the beginning and intermediate stages (Bander, 1978).

Since words occur in context and not in isolation, vocabulary should be taught in sentences and paragraphs. Context will often make clear the meaning of words that have different areas of meaning in different languages. Writing involves greater demands on vocabulary resources than conversation. Teachers who are preparing ESOL students to write in English "cannot afford to neglect the conceptual nature of language" (Raimes, 1978, p. 1). Therefore, the ESOL student needs to develop skills for massive vocabulary expansion. Instruction in vocabulary that is specific to writing (such as academic and technical terminology) should be part of the composition class. The necessity for direct, systematic vocabulary instruction for ESOL students is stressed by Richards (1976) and Judd (1978).

Currently available textbooks in controlled composition are useful tools to teach writing on the level of the word and the sentence. They help ESOL students manipulate the elements of language in substitution frames based on models. These exercises typically provide practice in carrying out various kinds of lexical and syntactic manipulations on the sentence level, such as choosing the right word, assigning or changing verb tense, placing or moving adverbs, making subjects and verbs agree, and combining sentences. Such exercises are basically grammatical exercises, but students work with connected discourse instead of the single, isolated sentences of grammar books. The teacher should also introduce exercises in which students can themselves generate sentences of a communicative value rather than simply manipulate sentences invented and organized for them. Students

may be asked, for example, to write a complete sentence, with or without words supplied, to describe a situation previously discussed in oral activities or based on a reading selection.

Paragraphs

Once students have learned how to write simple sentences, they can begin to put these sentences together into a sustained sequence of expression. Different kinds of exercises can be devised to develop ability in paragraph development. Students can be asked to write a summary of a reading selection or to rewrite a dialogue as a narrative (or vice versa). As pointed out earlier, paragraph-development patterns often vary according to culture. Practice in the English pattern with the topic-sentence technique should form part of writing teaching at this stage. Kaplan (1980) suggests a few devices to teach the English paragraph-development pattern to ESOL students. A normal paragraph may be scrambled, and students rearrange the scrambled sentences in their normal order. Or students may be given a carefully written topic sentence and then asked "to fill out the subdivisions of the topic sentence with examples and illustrations chosen to support the point" (p. 412).

At this stage, linguistic and rhetorical resources in paragraph development should be taught. The appreciation of devices needed for effective communication--such as transition, linking, and subordination--is an important step towards effective writing. ESOL students should be encouraged to analyze what they read for its organizational structure and rhetorical devices. Analysis of texts should be followed by active practice on linguistic and rhetorical resources found in the models.

Free Composition

Real writing occurs when students invent and organize sentences by themselves rather than changing and manipulating sentences that someone else has invented and organized. In other words, real writing is free-composition writing. Taylor (1980, p. 368)

believes that it is "possible and even desirable to teach free composition" even to low-level ESOL students. Since "non-linguistic factors are significant in learning to write . . . [and] because these abilities are intellectual and logical rather than specifically linguistic, . . . teaching basic composition skills does not necessitate high target-language proficiency" (p. 369). These skills "can be taught as soon as students can write reasonably acceptable simple sentences" (p. 369). Basic composition skills should be taught parallel to and as reinforcement of grammatical proficiency.

From the pedagogical point of view, the ESOL student still needs some form of guidance even in free composition. When choosing topics, teachers should ask themselves what topics students will enjoy writing about and what topics should be avoided because of the students' cultural backgrounds. The topics selected should be in line with students' language ability and vocabulary knowledge. Students should also be prepared before starting to write free compositions. The teacher can, for example, review possible ideas that can be used for the topic. It is not unusual for students to be at a loss for ideas when they are assigned to write free compositions if they are not properly prepared. Furthermore, students can be guided to organize ideas into a logical outline that will serve as a scaffold for writing.

Teaching free composition also requires teaching the revision process. Students should be trained to look at their work critically, to discover mistakes, and to make their own corrections. According to Diedrich (1974), positive comments help students to improve their writing. He believes "that noticing and praising whatever a student does well improves writing more than any kind or any amount of correction of what he does badly" (p. 20). On the other hand, mistakes in word choice, word form, syntactic structure, or rhetorical structure should not be ignored. Helping students realize why they made a mistake, what correct word form or structure should be used in a given context, and how they can avoid making the same mistake again is necessary if students are to improve their writing skills.

Talking with students and asking them what they want to say has proved in many cases to help the teacher establish the causes of lack of intelligibility found in students' compositions (Raimes, 1978). Error analysis of students' papers also enables the teacher to identify writing problems and to devise appropriate remedial exercises.

Linguistic and rhetorical competencies are the two main components of writing skill. Effective materials for teaching writing to ESOL students are those that aim at developing these two competencies. The preparation of such materials requires a good groundwork in contrastive grammar, contrastive semantics, contrastive rhetoric, and error analysis. Because learning proceeds from recognition to production, the ESOL teacher should select teaching-learning activities that give students ample opportunities to recognize linguistic and rhetorical structures and devices through the analysis of models and to draw on other language skills to build and improve their writing skill.

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PROFESSIONAL WRITING PROGRAMS AND THE UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE

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These days, who can blame an instructor of business or technical writing for feeling a bit smug? As enrollments in literature courses have dropped, enrollments in writing courses have soared. Indeed, some departments of English have correctly perceived this enthusiasm for writing as a means of academic survival, at least at a level that might preserve our literary heritage.

For years, of course, many of those who mined that heritage perceived the need for advanced writing courses as bordering on the need for tire repair, or ballroom dancing. So we ought not be surprised that after so many years of living below the academic salt, teachers of business and technical writing are asserting themselves--and not just in more courses and larger roles in their departments. At many institutions, they are moving toward semi-autonomous entities within their departments, and in some cases even into their own degree-granting programs.

Their reasons seem irresistible. No privileged connection exists between reading Donne or Conrad and writing legal briefs or technical reports. The argument that if we expose our students to Great Writing they will somehow absorb its quality is belied by the most perfunctory inspection of our own scholarly journals. Indeed, if that argument were true, our most mediocre graduate students would be among our best writers. I do not know about your graduate students. But I do know that mine are not.

Furthermore, by moving away from their colleagues in departments of English, teachers of business and technical writing may avoid that most destructive consequence of a too finely drawn literary education--that insistence on enforcing the trivia of usage: that vs. which, hopefully never as a sentence modifier, and never at the beginning of a sentence, etc. The reality of discourse in the world outside our halls does not put a premium on the principles of Fowler and Follett, but on prose that gets a job done. And under any circumstances, when business and technical writing faculty move away from departments of English, they also distance themselves from the resentment that so often now appears where teachers of literature feel that their wisdom and knowledge, the values of liberal education, are being rejected in favor of what must seem to be crass vocational preparation.

One obvious consequence of this increased independence is more course titles in the catalog: writing for health-care personnel, pre-law writing, composition for business writers, etc. One of my colleagues at Loyola University in Chicago has counted almost 200 different titles. As the general demand for writing courses has increased, the technical and business writing staffs satisfy it by inventing more specialized courses. And to flesh out whole degree programs in communications, technical or otherwise, they create courses in graphics, in the technology of electronic data management, in word processing, etc. None of this is surprising. Nor is it intellectually dishonest. If it is self-serving, it also serves those students who believe they need such courses.

But I want to suggest that if this kind of narrow specialization and increasing separation from departments of English and American literature is predictable and understandable, it may be misconceived.

Let me begin with some principles of education that seem, at least to me, almost axiomatic:

1. Large numbers of students will end up doing something other than what they prepare to do.

2. If they do what they train to do, ten years hence they will be doing something different.

3. If our students succeed in their professions, they will rise above local technical concerns to address matters directed more toward policy, management, public relations, etc.

4. When they become those managers, they will also become increasingly responsible for what others in their organization write, for the general environment, the general system of communciation and information flow in their organizations.

I should think that these principles require little comment. Current economic conditions make our students keenly aware of their need to prepare for a specific job, and so they seek out practical courses. But as important as that may seem at the moment, few of them really understand that they will nevertheless end up doing something different from what they think they will do. It is now virtually a cliche that employers claim to want most employees who have learned how to learn, who have acquired the skills of analysis and communication, rather than narrow skills appropriate to some specific occupation, skills that they will probably have to replace even if they do end up doing what they think they want to do. If anything characterizes the difference between a liberal education and a trade-school education, it is the capacity to learn, not how to perform some local task, but how to inquire, how to understand. If that is true, then tying instruction in writing to a narrow field of specialization, even if it is as broadly defined as "Technical Writing," is only trade-school work. It might prove useful in the short run, but that's all.

Second, if nothing else is true these days, today's technology will be different ten years hence. That does not mean that writing about the technology changes, but it raises the more general problem of a liberal education again. And that is, we like to think we teach not just for tomorrow, but for next year, for

the next century. And in light of our prior assumption--that our students will be working in a field they did not prepare for anyway--such a principle is in fact probably more practical in the long run.

These two axioms--we change fields as rapidly as the fields themselves change--argue against tying courses in writing to narrow subject matters.

But the third and fourth points seem to me to go to the heart of the matter. If our students do succeed in their professions and rise through managerial levels, as some inevitably will, they will be increasingly concerned not with purely technical operational matters but with policy and administration, with analysis and public relations, and as a consequence, will be writing less for technically trained subordinates and more for other managers, other professionals, others in and out of their organization who may not share their technical training.

Moreover, those who do rise above the narrow concerns of circuitry and bookkeeping will have increasing responsibilities that will require them to demonstrate their ability to analyze and manage the writing of others--others who may not be strictly in the fields for which these managers trained or in which they previously worked. There is abroad in our society an immense amount of very bad writing, writing for which we should have a civil contempt. But if we save none of that contempt for the managers who supervise those who produce that writing, then we misdirect our concern. We might as well blame the production-line worker for a shabby car, when we should blame the foreman or the quality control inspector, finally, perhaps, the board of directors.

As much as they manage anything else, managers manage communication. They are not responsible for just the quality of the product, but for communicating to those under them, and around them, how to create the discourse that in coming decades will be the product of this civilization. Managers have to be able to distinguish clear and unclear communication, explain why it is clear or unclear, explain how to make unclear

writing clear. They have to understand how written communication works in an institutional setting, what defeats it, how to improve it. That requires knowledge that goes beyond how to write about hydraulic engineering or to compose nonabusive collection letters.

And whatever else we may think about the future, the time American workers spend on communication will only increase. Indeed, the product of the American economy will increasingly be information. It has been estimated that by 1990, 55 million people will be employed in activities that are basically concerned with the circulation of information (Strassman, 1981). And according to some data generated by the management consultant firm of Theodore Barry and Associates (1980), the whole economy will, by the turn of the century, evolve into a largely white-collar service industry. Some figures:

	Percent of Total Work Force	
	1900	2000
White collar	30%	70%
Professional, managerial	3	21
Administrative, service, sales	4	28
Clerical	23	21

These figures are on the face of them unlikely: They project that one-half of the entire American work force will be made up of professionals, managers, administrators, sales and service people. Our educational system is unlikely to produce that many literate, educated adults who can handle the responsibilities those positions require. (It might be noted that the figure for clerical workers does not increase proportionately, a fact that reflects increased office automation.)

But even if these figures are exaggerated, they are nonetheless suggestive. And however imprecise they

may be, as we move toward an information-based economy, the problem of white-collar productivity will become increasingly important, as increasing numbers of marginally qualified people are called upon to process increasing amounts of information. Consider how managers spend their time now: According to several studies, white-collar managers spend about one-fifth of their time preparing documents, another two-fifths reading and analyzing them (Faigley, Miller, Meyer, & Witte, 1981). So we can estimate that from half to two-thirds of a white-collar manager's time is spent reading or writing.

According to a Booze, Allen, Hamilton Management Consultants study (personal communication), white-collar workers waste about 25% of their time. About a third of that time is wasted as a result of unclear communication. No one has studied, however, the amount of time wasted reading documents that never had to be written in the first place, that were twice as long as they had to be, that forced a reader to read twice as much as he or she had need to, that were so confusingly written that they had to be read twice to be understood. Nor did they measure how much time is wasted writing documents that are twice as long as they have to be, how much time writers spend dithering over irrelevant details of composition, over getting started, in wasted revisions--or in no revision. In short, the measureable time wasted over ineffective communication may be only the tip of the iceberg. Who has measured, for example, the amount of time wasted reading unclear, confusing, prolix government regulations? A small example:

> The standard requires emergency exit location markings to be placed in certain occupant spaces because of a possible contradiction under the proposed standard between the requirement that the identification markings be located within six inches of the point of operation and the requirement that the markings be visible to a seated occupant. The NHTSA has concluded that emergency egress could be hindered if the passenger has difficulty in finding the marking, and that loca-

> tion of the marking outside of an occupant space containing an adjacent seat, which could be permitted under the proposed standard, could create this problem. At the same time it is desirable for the identification and instructions to be located near the point of release. Therefore, the final rule requires that when a release mechanism is not located within an occupant space containing an adjacent seat, a label indicating the location of the nearest release mechanism shall be placed within that occupant space.

Compare the time and energy it takes to read this:

> The NHTSA has set a new standard that requires a manufacturer of buses to place in every occupant space of a bus a label that shows the location of the nearest emergency exit. The previous standard required only that the manufacturer place a label within six inches of the point where a passenger operates the emergency exit, and that a seated passenger be able to see it. But if the passengers in other seats do not know where the emergency exit is because they cannot see the label, they would not be able to find the exit in an emergency. Therefore, we have decided that bus manufacturers must put in each occupant space a label that shows passengers the location of the nearest emergency exit.

All of this may sound grimly practical, even vocational. But thinking through problems of this kind requires skills that transcend particular vocational preparation. Narrowly drawn courses, tied to learning how to write about specific subject matter, may provide some short-term advantage, but over the long haul, they will be less than entirely useful in preparing our students, particularly our best students, for their responsibilities ten years hence.

All of this would be reason enough to reject the highly specialized course in written communication.

But there is another reason why we ought not depend on narrowly circumscribed courses, a reason that some may find debatable. And that is that regardless of field, most adult writers are afflicted by the same problems. Too many adult writers do not know how to write sentences that are direct and precise; they do not know how to tie sequences of sentences together into chunks of coherent discourse; they do not know how to manage the shape of an entire discourse to anticipate its effects on different audiences.

Here is an example of what I mean at the level of sentences, two passages on entirely different topics that suffer from essentially the same problem (both are genuine):

> This agreement shall run from January 1, 1982 to December 31, 1982, provided, however, that it may be terminated by either party without cause upon thirty days written notice to the other party. Further provided that such termination will not be effective to terminate any Advisory Agreement or to terminate any commitments made by the client as agent for an investor with termination of obligations under such latter Agreement or commitments to be terminated as provided in the Advisory Agreement and the commitments.

> Determination of responsibility for turnover of cementwork should be settled in order for the avoidance of interference in plumbing the building by placing guy wires in convenient and safe areas.

The second sentence of the first passage and the whole of the second are close to unreadable, and entirely ambiguous, because neither makes clear precisely who or what it supposed to be doing what. Granted that there are times when a writer wants to be obscure, but since no one has to teach us how to be that, and since every writer has occasion to be clear and concise, writers and their administrators should understand how the pervasive disjunction between agent and subject, action and verb, makes the discourse if not incomprehensible,

at least difficult. And while that is a topic that may seem in this context only vocational, it is a principle of linguistic organization that a generation of linguists has debated. It is an issue that goes to the heart of a substantial part of recent research in transformational-generative case grammars (Fillmore, 1968).

Here is a passage that illustrates another typical problem among mature writers (note that we need not be medical researchers to recognize whether the first or second is better written):

> Alteration of mucosal and vascular permeability by a toxin elaborated by the vibrio is one current hypothesis to explain this kind of severe diarrhea. Electron-microscope changes in small capillaries located near the basal surface of the epithelial cells, and the appearance of numerous microvesicles in the cytoplasm of the mucosal cells is evidence in favor of this hypothesis. Hydrodynamic transport of fluid into the interstitial tissue and then through the mucosa into the lumen of the gut is believed to depend on altered capillary permeability.

Compare:

> One current hypothesis to explain this kind of severe diarrhea is that a toxin elaborated by the vibrio alters mucosal and vascular permeability. In favor of this hypothesis are electron-microscope changes in the small capillaries located near the basal surface of the epithelial cells, and the appearance of numerous microvesicles in the cytoplasm of the mucosal cells. It is believed that altered capillary permeability allows hydrodynamic transport of fluid into the interstitial tissue and then through the mucosa into the lumen of the gut.

The first contradicts the theme-rheme principle elaborated by those Czech linguists concerned with what has

now come to be called Functional Sentence Perspective (Daneš, 1974). In brief, it stipulates that in a well-formed sentence, we place first information that is old, repeated, familiar, expected, relatively more accessible; we place last information that is relatively more surprising, more important, less expected. And again, while this principle is on the one hand a pragmatic principle for clear writing, it is also the result of a considerable amount of intellectual energy and has become a crucial insight into syntactic organization. When we discuss it as a principle of clear style, we are also discussing a matter of considerable scholarly importance to contemporary linguists.

Indeed, it is now possible to elaborate a more complete picture of sentence structure:

Theme (old)		Rheme (new)
Agent	Action	Goal
Subject	Verb	Complement

Even this picture is a bit oversimplified, but it lays out clearly two general principles of clarity:

1. The subject of the sentence should express (a) old information and (b) when convenient, the agent of the action.

2. The verb of the sentence should express the crucial action of the assertion.

What we have here is not a set of random bits of advice about style, a la Strunk and White, tied to a local pragmatic application, but rather a very powerful principle of psycholinguistic behavior that is not beyond the understanding of a reasonably intelligent undergraduate, a principle that resulted from a good many years of research and debate by linguists, psycholinguists, and cognitive psychologists. It is not a

principle that applies to engineering writing but not business writing. It applies to all writing, to all written discourse.

It would be a mistake, however, to assert that this principle can be applied in any simple and mechanical way. Compare these two passages:

> The cathedral at Chartres, I have said, says something to the people of this village which it cannot say to me; but it is important to understand that this cathedral says something to me which it cannot say to them. Perhaps they are struck by the power of the spires, the glory of the windows; but they have known God, after all, longer than I have known him, and in a different way, and I am terrified by the slippery bottomless well, down which heretics were hurled to death, and by the obscene, inescapable gargoyles jutting out of the stone and seeming to say that God and the devil can never be divorced.

> The people of this village, I have said, recognize something in the cathedral at Chartres which I do not; but it is important to understand that I recognize something in this cathedral which they do not. Perhaps they wonder at the power of the spires, the glory of the windows; but God has made himself known to them, after all, longer than he has made himself known to me, and in a different way, and I recoil from the slippery bottomless well, down which . . ..

The first passage is James Baldwin's original, from "Stranger in the Village." We can see that he is doing more than merely manipulating old and new information. He is assigning agency to the cathedral, then to the people, almost not at all to himself. We become conscious of this only when we understand the stylistic options of the unselected second version. Which is truer? better? The question seems almost without meaning. In some sense, they are both true, depending on the truth Baldwin wanted to communicate. Had he

wanted to make himself the agent of the action throughout, he could have:

> I do not see in the cathedral at Chartres that which the people of this village do; but it is important to understand that I do see something which they cannot . . ..

But his truth required that he make himself the goal of the action, to be acted on by cathedrals and western culture, and so he was able to manipulate word choice and grammar to achieve that end.

Do we find the same sort of problem in less imaginative writing? At every turn:

> Readers remember key prose information better if they read that information at the beginning of its unit of discourse.
>
> Writers will fix key prose information in the memory of their readers more effectively if they place that information at the beginning of its unit of discourse.
>
> A unit of discourse will communicate key prose information more effectively if it communicates that information at its beginning.
>
> Key prose information will communicate itself more effectively if it appears at the beginning of its unit of discourse.
>
> We improve our memory for key prose information when we read it at the beginning of a unit of discourse.

Is one of these sentences closer to "the truth" than any other? If we believe that "truth" does not lie out there in the world waiting to be caught and mounted, but rather lies close to the intersection of perception, convention, symbolic representation, and intention, then it is clear that a simpleminded application of any rule of style will defeat not merely a reader's understanding, but perhaps the writer's as well.

Different areas of inquiry provide different criteria for "truth," and each definition reflects not merely different perceptions of experience, but different intentions in their representation. To deal with the language of technical or business writing from a locally pragmatic point of view, then, may deflect the student from crucial insights about language: Language is an instrument that cannot in any straightforward way let us look straight through it to the truth. It cannot help but shape what we take to be truth. A narrowly defined course in pre-law writing or health-care writing may raise important issues about audiences and vocabulary and conventional formats and documentation form peculiar to those fields; but it may not address issues that in any liberal education must be perceived as more compelling, more critical to a society that will not only produce more written information, but be increasingly influenced by it.

There are other issues that adult writers typically wrestle with: How does a writer think about different audiences for a single document? How does he organize documents to serve those audiences? There is a simpleminded principle that distinguishes what we might call instrumental writing from writing that is more reflective, more belletristic, less immediately pragmatic. It reflects the contract we assume our reader makes with what we write, a contract that reflects the particular social convention we assume in different contexts governed by different conventions.

In educational settings, the teacher-reader usually cooperatively contracts to read student essays from beginning to end, straight through, in the right sequence. In much professional writing, however, the reader contracts to read only until he or she believes the most important information has appeared. At that point the reader may or may not go on. And in other contexts, if the discourse is so overtly structured that the conclusion, named as such, comes last, as in most published scientific articles, the reader may read the summary last, then the discussion, then the introduction, then the methods and materials, then the results.

Here, for example, is an excerpt from a discourse that violates the contract:

> The final question we wish to address is the consideration of whether property owned by the Township, acquired either by or condemnation or exchange, may be used for highway purposes. The primary concern with respect to the acquisition of properties by the municipality and the construction thereon of a highway is whether such construction is found to be in the public interest. Where the construction is found to be in the public interest, it will be upheld as a valid exercise of municipal authority.
>
> New Jersey courts have adopted a liberal view with respect to what constitutes a public use or interest. In accordance with this view, the fact that private interests will be served will not defeat the construction of the highway where the paramount reason for its construction is to serve the public.
>
> [review of several court cases follows]
>
> As is evident from the above noted conclusions, the Township may exchange certain municipally owned property for other property, and, provided that the construction thereon is found to be in the public interest, may thereafter utilize that property to construct a highway which will provide access to the redevelopment site.

That passage came at the end of an advisory letter to a township thinking about selling off some property to acquire other property on which would be built a freeway ramp. It begins with the law, continues with some observations about the application of the law, and then concludes with what the readers really want to know: Can they build the ramp? One must imagine a twenty-page document organized in the same way, with several audiences, each with a different interest. How much

time does each reader waste trying to find what is important to his or her special interests? The passage is a narrative of the writer's research when it should have presented the results of that research.

On the other hand, that kind of organization is entirely appropriate to articles written for audiences of historians, literary critics, philosophers, readers of newspaper editorials, newspaper columns, etc., because those readers in those contexts make a different contract: They, in effect, promise to read from beginning to end, ready to accept at the end whatever conclusion they have been led toward.

So whether writers arrange their material to make a point at the beginning or end obviously depends on the conventions of the discourse, conventions which reflect the context and needs of the audience. The particular contract we can assume with our reader depends on the universe of discourse we write in, on the social conventions of the field, conventions that differ from field to field. While a technical or business writing course may make clear the conventions in some one field, where is the student to understand that discourse is strongly field-dependent, that discourse form changes when fields change? Again, the issue may seem mundanely pragmatic, but in fact it constitutes one of the principal issues in the ethnography of linguistic behavior. It is a topic of considerable intellectual interest among anthropologists, linguists, even literary critics. It is possible to be "relevant" to the interests of our students, but at the same time to address issues of considerable intellectual rigor.

And there is yet a more general problem: Writers, as they become professionals in their fields, acquire the professional accent of that field. Indeed to be a doctor, one must sound like a doctor; to be a lawyer, one must sound like a lawyer. And so apprentices in law school and medical school and business school and graduate schools work hard to acquire the vocabulary, the tone, the accents of the field so that they can join the conversation as equals. But that acquisition in itself is a subject of considerable social importance. Is it a necessary stage in the socialization of

professionals? Is it necessary to sound like a professional in order to assure that a non-professional audience will take seriously, have confidence in, whatever the professional says?

In a society that is becoming increasingly professionalized, the role of the professional dialect becomes increasingly important. But while it may serve to identify the members of the caste and reassure those who have to place their confidence in professionals, the dialect excludes those who have not mastered it. Thus we have professional languages that seem deliberately to isolate, to exclude merely educated lay people.

But as I said before, there is a legitimate question in the degree to which professional fields may require such jargons, even at the expense of general comprehensibility. Jargon testifies not only to membership in a guild but to a kind of authorial reliability. In my work with professionals, I have found that it has consistently been the very experienced, very confident professionals who are most willing to give up their legalese, their medicalese, their governmentalese, etc. More often it is the youngest, least experienced professionals who grimly resent any effort to make them surrender that which took so many years of professional education to acquire.

But if it is possible to eliminate a good deal of the jargon, the professional gobbledygook, it is equally important to distinguish between the necessary language, the "terms of art," to use a lawyerly term, from the unnecessary verbiage, from the complexity and pomposity that betrays the merely uncertain. Take, for example, the passage cited earlier:

> This agreement shall run from January 1, 1982 to December 31, 1982, provided, however, that it may be terminated by either party without cause upon thirty days written notice to the other party. Further provided that such termination will not be effective to terminate any Advisory Agreement or to terminate any commitments made by the client as agent for

> an investor with termination of obligations under such latter Agreement or commitments to be terminated as provided in the Advisory Agreement and the commitments.

The first sentence is clear enough. But the second, though it rings with lawyerly language, could have been written like this:

> However, if either party does terminate the agreement by written notice, they do not thereby terminate
>
> (1) any Advisory Agreement,
>
> (2) any commitment made by the client who acts as agent for an investor.
>
> To terminate either (1) or (2), the party must abide by the provisions of any Advisory Agreements or commitments.

The ability to distinguish necessary complexity from mere verbiage is crucial to anyone responsible for the language of professionals or technicians. But more crucially perhaps, it is a knowledge that may help slow the drift toward linguistic insularity. About twenty years ago, C. P. Snow (1963) wrote about the two cultures that he saw becoming increasingly opposed: the culture of the scientist and the culture of the humanist. I think there may be another cultural split no less damaging: it is the split between those who are socialized into <u>any</u> institutional language and those who are not. It is a split both horizontal and vertical. Those with little education do not enter the discourse at all. They require the assistance of social workers who understand government regulations or of legal aides who understand the language of contracts and guarantees. The discourse of the educated alienates them not merely from participating in institutional life, but even from what it is <u>like</u> to participate in it, to have any sense of belonging to the public discourse. The educated are alienated as well, but only from one another, and not with the added burden of a sense of inferiority, stupidity, or incompetence. We educated simply become enraged--or at

least we should--at the incomprehensibility of institutional prose in which we have an interest. That we are not taught to have contempt for it testifies to a failure in our education.

Thus, a course that focuses on a narrow field of a single profession is more rather than less likely to concentrate on the alienating tendencies of its language. Indeed, such a course may be more likely to encourage that alienation by treating the dialect as something to be merely learned rather than understood and controlled.

What I am addressing here is the question of socialization into universes of discourse as a subject itself. It is a subject that ought to be raised overtly, just as questions of the philosophy of law or the ethics of medicine or the morality of government service ought to be raised for those preparing for those careers.

We are, indeed, addressing the nature of a liberal education: What are the underlying principles, the distinguishing features, the abstract structures and relationships that characterize the professional uses of language? How does professional language affect a society that depends on the skillful use of language? Who is responsible for the character of public discourse? Should anyone be responsible? These are not questions likely to be raised in a course in business-letter writing.

Now I should also make clear what I am not advocating. I am not suggesting that we offer no specialized courses in technical communication whatsoever. That would defeat the very point I am trying to make: Without some experience in the local discourse of some particular field, none of the general principles of discourse would have any meaning. Unfortunately, despite the increased interest in writing courses in many schools, few curricula require a course in the nature of discourse itself and in its social role in a society increasingly dependent on discourse. And yet that is what is necessary if we are to take seriously this newly perceived interest in

professional writing. What I am arguing is that one course ought to address general principles of discourse, not local conventions, that one course ought to provide the theoretical foundations for all other courses in specialized writing.

Such a course, even a series of courses, could be conducted outside of English departments. These issues concern departments of linguistics, political science, education, even philosophy. Indeed, given the body of knowledge that most English departments dedicate themselves to protecting, technical-writing courses and programs might be more comfortable outside departments of English--or at least in semi-autonomous groups.

I would still argue that such courses belong in English departments, that they should, to whatever degree they can, maintain close contact with the traditional curriculum of English and American language and literature. First, as hard as technical writing courses could strive after theory to legitimize themselves, on the basis of cognitive psychology, anthropology, etc., literary theory has contributed more than any of these to answering questions of value, of effect, of reader response. Departments of literature do not much care for empirical research, but without some theoretical basis, some humanistic basis, empirical research into the way writers write and readers read will become mere number shuffling. Second, if we take C. P. Snow's argument seriously, technical discourse ought to be grounded in humanistic discourse, not as a visitor in an alien land. Discourse is discourse. Alienation from discourse is alienation not just from technical discourse, but from literary discourse as well. Third, the close analysis of literary texts will make writers sensitive to nuance, to tone, to intention in ways that the analysis of technical reports cannot possibly hope to achieve.

And finally, I would make the argument stand on its head: Departments of literature need to be closely associated with those who best understand how discourse in general works. If literary critics have spent considerable time formulating theories of reader response and affective stylistics, their understanding

of non-fictive or non-poetic discourse is at best often feeble. A teacher of poetry or fiction or drama who fails to understand the social basis, the social contract of public discourse cannot understand as fully as he or she might, or should, why literary discourse has come to occupy the place it has in the permanent discourse of our society.

But as I said, the reverse is also true: The idea that a teacher of professional writing need not understand, need not be familiar with, the kind of discourse that has achieved a special standing through history--such an idea can only cripple understanding of discourse in general, and the understanding of the richness of discourse of our students, in particular.

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REMEDIAL WRITING COURSES: DO THEY LIMIT MORE THAN FOSTER GROWTH IN WRITING?

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Many attempts to help college remedial* writers--attempts that are often well-intentioned and seemingly commonsensical--may, in fact, be ineffective, even counter-productive, for these attempts reduce, fragment, and possibly misrepresent the composing process. We may be limiting growth in writing in five not unrelated ways. (1) Our remedial courses are self-contained, with little conceptual or practical connection to the larger academic writing environment. (2) The writing topics assigned in these courses--while meant to be personally relevant and motivating and to assist in the removal of error--may neither motivate nor contribute to the production of correct academic prose. (3) The writing teacher's vigilance for error most likely conveys to students a very restricted model of the composing process. (4) Our notion of "basic skills" has become so narrow that we attempt to separate the intimately related processes of reading and thinking from writing. (5) In some attempts to reform staid curricula, we have inadvertently undercut the expresssive/exploratory possibilities of academic writing and have perceived fundamental discourse strategies and structures as restricting rather than enhancing the production and comprehension of prose.

*I use the term "remedial" with some reservation, for it is often more pejorative than accurately descriptive.

At various places in my speculations I'll offer potential solutions to the problems I pose. For the most part, these solutions come from programs I run at UCLA, though some of these solutions were spawned during my days as a teacher of "developmental" writers in special programs for parolees and returning Vietnam veterans. So, though this paper is primarily addressed to teachers of traditional college "remedial" writers vs. truly "basic" writers of the sort we see during periods of open admissions, many of the ideas grew out of my work with students from both camps. I believe, therefore, that what I'm about to say has broad applicability to that large, complex stratum of writers who have been labeled "substandard."

REMEDIAL COURSES ARE SELF-CONTAINED

Many remedial courses do not fit into the larger writing environment in which students find themselves. Much of the writing our students do is distressingly like that Applebee (1981) found in secondary education--phrase to paragraph length fill-ins or brief responses. When fuller assignments are given, the topics are most often personal and simple, meant to be relevant and accessible but, in fact, are usually old-hat and unacademic--a unique artifact of the composition classroom. Furthermore, though some courses give the student more than a class period to work on a paper, many others limit writing to 20 to 50 minute in-class sprints.

The end result is that our students' papers are flawed--not only by their writers' current compositional inadequacies, but also by their very writing situations. These papers are then returned to their source: composition teachers. But how can teachers honestly provide a vital and involved response to spurts of writing on topics like "Describe a favorite place or event" or "Give your opinion of X"? Clearly, these topics and situations are not preparing students for their university lives.

In all too many cases we have created a writing course that does not lead outward toward the intellectual community that contains it. And that's a pity,

for a remedial writing curriculum must fit into the overall context of a university education: Students must, early on, begin wrestling with academically oriented topics that help them develop into more critical thinkers, that provide them with some of the tools of the examined life, and that will assist them in the courses they take.

One way to lay groundwork for a meaningful context is to employ the procedure we used in developing UCLA's Freshman Preparatory Program. To find out what students were being asked to do when they wrote for university classes, we collected 445 essay and take-home examination questions as well as paper topics from 17 departments and performed some relatively simple analyses. Our findings:

1. Most questions and topics seemed to require expositional discourse (transactional in Britton's, 1970, scheme, reference in Kinneavy's, 1971). The balance required argumentative discourse (Britton's conative, Kinneavy's persuasive), but a special kind of argument I'll label academic argument--that is, not a series of emotionally charged appeals and exhortations, but a calculated marshalling of information, a sort of exposition aimed at persuading. (For additional discussion of argument in the academy, see Bator, 1980; Bizzell, 1978; Kneupper, 1978.)

2. Students had to work with large bodies of information garnered from lectures and readings and often had to write from texts. No assignments called for students to narrate or describe personal experiences, to observe relatively immediate objects or events, to express a general opinion on something not studied closely, to reflect on self.

3. While in-class essay examinations required quick, nearly regurgitative responses, students' other assignments called for reflecting on a broad range of complex material, selecting and ordering information, and seeing and re-seeing data and events in various contexts.

4. Various academic audiences write and read with an elaborate and often subtle, even tacit, set of philosophical and methodological assumptions that determine what they'll consider acceptable or unacceptable reasoning, presenting of evidence, and inferring (cf. Phenix, 1964). For example, reflections on personal events are considered legitimate evidence in many areas of sociology and anthropology, but much less legitimate in behavioral psychology. Developing a sensitivity to the plurality of these assumptive foundations and the conventions that arise from them is crucial, for they shape the complex rhetorical relationship between writer and reader in the academy.

5. In another survey (Rose, 1979), we found that some stylistic information we had been giving students in English composition simply did not reflect any sort of broad consensus among even as limited an audience as academics. While it was no big surprise to find out that our concerns about, say, avoiding passive constructions and writing in the first person were not so fervently shared by other disciplines, it was sobering to hear remarks like the following--this from a Management professor:

> Students come to us writing over-academic, highly embroidered prose. We, in turn, have to retrain them to write simple, direct reports for companies, reports that someone will feel like reading. (Rose, 1979, p. 273)

Techniques like the Christensen cumulative sentence or the topic sentence seductively placed at the end of a paragraph hampered rather than enhanced or enlivened communication for some readers in some contexts.

Considering the complex discourse reality our surveys revealed, our students and our courses fell pitifully short. We needed a remedial program that slowly but steadily and systematically introduced remedial writers to transactional/expositional academic discourse, that relied on texts and bits of texts, that created full, rich assignments which encouraged students to develop their structural, rhetorical, stylistic facility, and that alerted students to stylistic/rhetorical variation within the university.

SIMPLE TOPICS, MOTIVATION, AND THE ELIMINATION OF ERROR

One questionable aspect of traditional remedial curricula is the simple, personal topic. Clearly, teachers don't assign topics like "Describe your favorite place" because they hold some deep affection for them. They have reasons. One very popular reason is best expressed thus: "I want to make the topic simple so if the student writes poorly, I'll know it had nothing to do with the strain of a complicated topic." Another popular reason concerns motivation: "If I can give them success experiences, they'll feel better about writing and want to write more."

Certainly it's a sound motivation and learning principle to begin with the simple and then move toward the more complex. But we shouldn't assume that the successful completion of an assignment students might well perceive as being simple, even juvenile, is going to make them feel better about themselves or their writing. My UCLA colleague, George Gadda, is currently attempting to phase into our Orientation Program a more university-oriented set of diagnostic topics. He still gives a typical "Describe your favorite object" topic, but also gives a topic, with a brief academically oriented reading passage, that requires summarizing or analyzing skills. Though it's seemingly more difficult, a number of students reported that they preferred the academic topic because, as one student succinctly put it, "This is the real thing."

Motivation to achieve in writing is much more complex than some composition theorists suppose. Personal topics are not necessarily more relevant than academic ones, and some of our students might not feel comfortable revealing highly personal experiences. Achievement motivation is a highly complex cognitive-affective phenomenon that includes such dimensions as perception of a task's difficulty and of the role of luck or skill in completing the task (Weiner, 1972, 1974). Add variables such as the degree of comfort with the task's content, and it is no longer clear that simple and personal topics are most motivating.

Now to the issue of cognitive overload and the concentration on error. It makes sense to assume that if we give students a topic for which they already have information, they and we can more readily focus on grammatical problems. But this might be a case of common sense misleading us, for while writers might eventually produce grammatically correct prose for one kind of assignment, that correctness might not hold when they face other kinds of tasks. Nielson (1979) found that when traditional writers shifted registers from the informal to the formal, their proficiency fell apart. Similar difficulties may arise when students shift from simpler discourse structures to more complex ones and from simpler to more complex topics. So we might guide students to the point where they write with few errors about their dorm rooms, but when they're asked to compare and contrast two opinions on dormitory housing (not to mention two economic theories), the organizational demands of comparing and contrasting and the more syntactically complicated sentences often attending more complex exposition or argument (Crowhurst, 1980) put such strain on their cognitive resources and/or linguistic repertoires that error might well re-emerge.

Therefore, we must carefully define and describe the kind of writing demanded of students in the academy, and then focus on that kind of writing--scaling our assignments down and building slowly, but scaling and building within the same discourse domain. For we cannot assume a simple transfer of skills across broadly different discourse demands.

Creating simple topics to aid in the correction of error, then, might be a less successful strategy than we think--error can't be isolated and removed; it can re-emerge when students move into tasks that challenge them in new ways. Furthermore, we might be demoralizing our students by giving them the same kind of topic they've been writing on for so many years. I'd suggest that we develop curricula that offer academically oriented topics, the difficulty of each being systematically gradated so that students are continually challenged in ways that don't overwhelm. Until students begin to develop some familiarity with such topics, we

will not be able to help them write relatively correct university prose.

ERROR VIGILANCE AND REDUCTIONISTIC MODELS OF COMPOSING

Our concern for error also results in something even more counterproductive. We might be unwittingly passing on an extremely constricted notion of what composing is. This occurs on three broad levels: the process, the conceptual, the rhetorical.

Many students come to see the writing process itself as a matter of framing a thought in correct language. The results of such perception are disastrous. Perl (1978) noted that basic writers wrote in halting spurts and produced extremely truncated products. They were so vigilant for error that their writing processes were stymied--they could not get the flow of their thoughts onto paper. Writing's possibilities for discovering, connecting, playing were lost.

On the conceptual dimension, our students come to believe that what counts is not the thought they give to a topic but how correctly that thought is conveyed. The results? Clean but empty papers. Tomlinson (1982) reports that even though the remedial writers' papers she studied were relatively error-free, her independent evaluators were "stunned" by the vapidity of the essays' contents.

On the rhetorical level, students may not grow beyond their limited notions of connecting thought to reader, not because they are egocentric, but, rather, because the local to global semantic and syntactic devices that establish that connection have not been opened up to them and, perhaps worse, the social base of making meaning and conveying it has not been established in their writing classroom. Just about the only rhetorical connection the correctness model establishes is the negative one: Err not lest ye be judged. That's sound advice, but not when it becomes the only rhetorical advice students get.

Let me cite a chilling--though preliminary--study by Hartwell (1981). He asked students labeled weaker

readers/writers and better readers/writers to respond to the question "What do people do when they write?" Notice the model of writing implied in the typical responses (misspellings corrected) of weaker elementary reader/writers: "They hold the pencil tightly." "Move their fingers. And write neat." Of weaker secondary readers/writers: "They put the point of the pencil to the paper and start making words and letters." Of weaker college readers/writers: "People write through English grammar, punctuation, etc." "First you pick your topic, then you make sure that you have enough information. Then you rewrite and check the spelling and copy it down."

The responses of better readers/writers were qualitatively different. The elementary level: "They think of what they are going to write. They ask a person if it sounds good." The secondary level: "They get stuff across to other people." The college level: "People explain their ideas, theories, stories and imagination to each other." Because these data are preliminary and because Hartwell has not yet shown whether these self-reports are linked to actual writing behaviors, I don't want to make too much of this. However, my own investigations of stymied writers (Rose, 1981) revealed the power of rigid rules and inaccurate assumptions, so I find it hard to take these self-reports lightly. The impressions of these weaker readers/writers imply a very limited notion of what composing is, a notion based on simple behaviors, narrow linear steps, and shriveled rhetorical possibilities. This notion might reflect their limited skills, but it also stands as a barrier to their improving.

However, I'm not trying to lay blame on the remedial writing teacher alone, if at all. There are powerful reasons to explain why some teachers reduce the process, conceptual, and rhetorical possibilities of composing. The public makes teachers feel negligent and vulnerable if they do not attempt to clear up error. Furthermore, as Laurence (1975) points out, scholars have not provided a comprehensive theory of error with which to study error, see patterns in our students' errors, and provide guidelines on how to assist students in understanding and remedying them.

Thus, the conscientious teacher can do little but keep marking. To do less--in the absence of any other guidelines--seems like shirking responsibility.

In addition, teachers have generally been offered limited definitions of "writing skills." One reason for this lies in the energetic movement of the '20s and '30s to insure mass education by reducing all learning to discrete steps, stages, bits of information and then holding teachers accountable for imparting fixed numbers of these steps, stages, bits during a given period of time. This "cult of efficiency" (Callahan, 1962) found its theoretical constructs and evaluative devices in the storehouse of a burgeoning educational psychology that was rapidly devising models and methods of quantifying and structuring knowledge. In this milieu, writing was reduced to text production and text to its most salient constituent parts. Though we currently hold to more advanced notions about composing, we still are partially entrapped by reductionistic models and measures (Shuy, 1981). Look, for example, at current evaluation procedures--for evaluation schemes reveal powerful assumptions about the object of evaluation.

Many evaluation schemes focus on product alone, do not incorporate issues of the writer's intention and the actual playing out of that intention in the process of composing the essay (Gere, 1980; Odell & Cooper, 1980), nor do they take account of the writer's relation to audience in any full way (Mitchell & Taylor, 1979; Odell, 1981). Furthermore, in all too many cases, crucial dimensions of any meaningful communication--like the accuracy of information and the legitimacy of the writer's reasoning with it--are put aside so that the felicity of the writing itself can be evaluated (Davis, Scriven, & Thomas, 1981). These procedures suggest that what counts most is a fixed and final and fairly limited product containing or lacking certain countable features or broad structural relationships or specific connections to the writing task. This sounds like a limited and fragmented notion of writing skills to me--perhaps <u>conceptually</u> not far removed from earlier rigid product notions, the kinds of seriously limited and perhaps limiting notions suggested by Hartwell's pilot study.

Clearly, we need to rethink our definitions of writing skills and do some fairly radical things to change the models of composing our students have internalized. It is possible, for example, that our remedial classes--at least some significant portion of them--should be very process-oriented. This means that we would help our students experience the rich possibilities of the writing process. We could lead them to see the value of writing as an ordering and storing aid by making them amateur ethnographers and turning them loose on a campus event with pad and pencil in hand. We could break them of conceiving of their written texts as static through exercises like our Preparatory Program's "Revision Scramble."

In this exercise, students listen to a 5-10 minute lecture on an academic topic, take notes, and then write either a summary or a critical reaction. At the next class, they listen to a further, brief lecture on the same topic, but with new information included. They must revise their summary or reaction in ways that account for the new. Thus they come to see that texts can--even must--evolve. We can get them to experience writing as meaning-making for self and others by engineering group projects that necessitate collaborative research, composing, and editing--thus moving them through process to product. For example, my colleague Bill Creasy gives his entire class the task of preparing a brief guidebook for incoming students. Teams of two to three are assigned aspects of campus life: dormitories, athletics, ethnic-study centers. Through the quarter, the class collects and selects information, writes it up, puts it on a word processor, and edits it. Dr. Creasy provides assistance as it's needed at each point along the way.

Sure, these assignments must be carefully structured, scaled down, and built upon, and, yes, for a while our students will struggle, and some will produce very flawed papers. But we'll have to train ourselves to wait, to live with uncertainty and comma splices. Some students may leave our classes writing papers that aren't so clean as some of us would like them to be, but at least these students will hold conceptions of

composing that will foster rather than limit growth in writing.

THE SEPARATION OF WRITING FROM READING AND THINKING

In our attempts to isolate and thereby more effectively treat "basic skills" we have not only reduced discourse complexity, but we have also separated writing from reading from thinking.

Presenting students with intellectually worthwhile problems, assisting them as they work through them, offering them strategies with which to explore them, showing them how to represent and, when necessary, reduce them, seems to have been equated with formal Aristotelean logic and relegated to the philosophy department. What a disservice. We should help remedial writers become familiar with heuristic routines that will enhance their interpretive powers. And if certain of us question heuristics as being too gimmicky, there's good old-fashioned patient and careful guidance with assignments requiring classifying, comparing, analyzing. In all cases, "thinking skills" must not be taught as a set of abstract exercises, but must be intimately connected to composition instruction.

When I bring up the need to incorporate reading into our basic courses, and particularly when I suggest we have our students work from a simple passage in writing their diagnostics, here's what I hear: "If you do that, you'll confound reading skills and writing skills. You'll never know why they make the mistakes they do. Is it because they can't read or they can't write?" Yes, reading and writing are different processes, but it is simply not true that they're unconnected. Petrosky (1982) explains how current theories present reading as a kind of "composing process"; people construct meaning from text rather than passively internalize it. Van Dijk (1980) points out that while we need to know the conventions, structures, and intentions of particular discourses to produce them, we likewise need such knowledge to comprehend them. And Krashen (1981) suggests that one's repertoire of discourse skills is built through reading.

Reading and writing are intimately connected in ways we're only beginning to understand. Furthermore, even if they weren't, a major skill in academic writing is the complex ability to write from other texts--to summarize, to disambiguate key notions and useful facts and incorporate them into one's own writing, to critically react to prose. Few academic assignments require students to produce material ex nihilo; they are almost always writing about, from, or through others' materials.

We have no choice but to begin conceiving of composition as a highly complex thinking/learning/reading/writing skill that demands holistic pedagogies. (Several other writers have recently called for variations of such integrated pedagogies: Bazerman, 1980; Sternglass, 1981.)

THE NARROWING OF EXPLORATORY DISCOURSE AND THE MISPERCEPTION OF DISCOURSE STRUCTURES

Not all causes of a narrowed model of and curriculum for composing stem from an overzealous vigilance for error or from limited conceptualizations of writing skill. Ironically, one cause might inadvertently have come from some of the most serious critics of standard composition fare, for in their eagerness to torpedo staid and wrong-headed notions about composing, they sometimes polarize issues that, in fact, lie along a continuum.

I suspect that when Macrorie (1970) inveighs against "Engfish" and Coles (1974) against "theme-writing," when politically conscious critics like Rouse (1979) complain that teaching standard patterns of discourse socializes and thus regiments minds, when Judy (1980, p. 39) says "the best student writing is motivated by personal feelings and experience," when Emig (1971) distinguishes between extensive and reflexive writing--when all these critics express these observations, they establish in the minds of some of their readers an essentially false set of dichotomies: to write in a voice other than one's most natural is to write inauthentically, to master and use strategies

like comparing and contrasting is to sacrifice freedom, to write on academic topics that don't have deep personal associations is to be doomed to mechanical, lifeless composing, and to write expositional/extensive academic prose is to sabotage the possibility of reflexive exploration. Again, let me restate that Coles, Judy, et al. don't necessarily make distinctions this rigidly. Many folks who cite them do.

What does this polarization do to the remedial writer's curriculum? At least two things: (1) The reflexive/exploratory possibilities of engaging in academic topics are not exploited. (2) Instruction in more complex patterns of discourse is delayed or soft-pedaled.

Reflexive/exploratory discourse has been too exclusively linked to "personal" writing, writing that deals with making sense of one's own feelings and experiences. In fact, making meaning for the self, ordering experience, establishing one's own relation to it is what informs any serious writing. A student writing a paper on Rousseau or on operant conditioning could--and should be encouraged to--engage in a good deal of self-referenced writing to make sense of difficult notions and, possibly, to weigh these notions against other readings, personal experience, and values. If we don't see all the exploratory possibilities inherent in academic writing, we won't encourage our writers to talk to each other and to us, to plumb their own thoughts, to freely explore the conceptual intricacies of a topic.

Writers simply cannot produce coherent, extended texts unless they possess some mental representation of what those texts should look like, what shape or structure they will take. Text linguists like Van Dijk (1980) and Beaugrande (1980) have begun to demonstrate the reality of these global discourse structures. Atwell (1981) has shown the central role these structures can play in the production of coherent text. And D'Angelo (1979, 1980) has recently suggested that these structures could well be related to Aristotelean topoi, the classical orator's repository of generating and structuring aids.

The sad truth is that many of our students don't get that much opportunity to read or write extended academic discourse before reaching us (Applebee, 1981; Mellon, 1981) and thus aren't afforded the chance to develop a wide repertoire of discourse structures or schemata. The lack of appropriate schemata will have disastrous results as remedial writers are asked to produce structurally complex prose by readers who, according to Freedman (1979), evaluate student writing with a good deal of emphasis on organization, a product feature resulting from appropriate discourse schemata. We have little choice, then, but to teach these schemata. And we have no reason to believe that students have to have every pronoun and antecedent correctly in place before they can learn discourse schemata.

Now, some would agree that students must master these complex schemata and add that a sensible remedial approach would be to begin with "simpler" patterns like narration and then eventually shift to higher order discourse. But, as I suggested earlier, we have reason to doubt that work on narration or description will build a repertoire of more abstract and complex schemata, schemata, that is, not based on chronological sequences or spatial arrangements. (In fact, writers often resort to narrative frameworks when they are unable to execute more complex or abstract discourse schemata. Narration becomes a substitute rather than a building block; Flower, 1979; Jacobs & Karliner, 1977.) Academic expositional discourse seems to be more cognitively demanding than simple narration or description (Matsuhashi, 1979; Williams & Riggs, 1981); it seems to embody global syntactic and semantic structures that are different from those found in narration and description (Cooper & Matsuhashi, in press; Van Dijk, 1980); and it requires sentences that tend to be syntactically different from those found in narration and description (Crowhurst, 1980; Thompson, in press; Williams, 1979). The studies just cited represent only beginnings in the exploration of the cognitive demands and structural features of different kinds of discourse, but they should make us wary of assuming that mastering, say, narrative structure will transfer to the construction of analytic essays.

I suggest, therefore, that we determine the organizational patterns required of our students in academic discourse, and slowly and systematically teach these patterns. They should not be conceived of or taught as "modes" of discourse or as rigid frameworks but, simultaneously, as strategies by which one explores information and as structures by which one organizes it. Students' freedom to learn would not be restricted by these strategies/structures; in fact, such learning would enhance their freedom, afford them more discourse options. Without these options, much academic discourse will be beyond these writers. For that fact, they are essential to the making and conveying of meaning in our culture. The question is, how should they be taught?

The two most natural ways to assimilate or learn these schemata is by reading a good deal of discourse containing them (Krashen, 1981; Mellon, 1981) and by experiencing the need for them as one encounters barriers while writing. The trouble is that our remedial writers don't have much time. They're enrolled in other classes, some of which demand structurally complex written responses to complex assignments. While we can suspend concern about, say, comma splices, we can't wait for students to assimilate these global structures--they are essential to reader comprehension. Students need them now. Yet we don't want to put our students through one more lifeless and disembodied drill on the "compare/contrast mode." What to do? I propose a four-tiered plan.

Make Sure That the Patterns/Strategies Are Real

The patterns/strategies to be taught should be derived from writing situations that students face daily. In the aforementioned surveys of university assignments, I found a number of global discourse strategies or patterns. These were either explicitly called for or seemed to be the best approaches to bring to purposely ambiguous or to poorly written questions. The most salient of these patterns were definition, seriation, classification, summary, compare/contrast, analysis, academic argument. With the exception of

analysis and academic argument--which I define in special ways--these patterns are sadly familiar. We see some combination of them in our rhetorics and readers, and they have, in all too many hands, come to represent much that stifles our pedagogy. But the problem is not that these schemata are inherently rigid or unuseful, but that they have not been taught both as thinking strategies and as discourse patterns. (For compatible viewpoints presenting somewhat different lists of strategies, see Gere & Smith, in press, Shaughnessy, 1977.) I would speculate that the reason these strategies/structures appeared so frequently in our surveys of academic writing situations (and, my colleague Ruth Mitchell tells me, in her surveys of business and professional writing as well) is that they are so central to the way we explore, order, and present information when we're engaged in transactional/referential discourse.

Create a Meaningful Context for Their Use

It is usually assumed that for writing to be meaningful, it must generate from issues and experiences that centrally involve the student. This assumption can result in some pretty superficial curricula, but can also lead to challenging pedagogies like Coles' (1974) that leads students to examine their own writing as ways of knowing and becoming or like Bartholomae's (1979) that weaves academic reading into students' reflections on, for example, their coming of age and requires them to turn an analytic eye onto their own and others' autobiographies. However, another meaningful context for student writing is the very academic environment in which they find themselves. If the discourse schemata I've listed are, on one hand, pragmatically offered as being central to success in the university and, on the other, offered as investigative tools necessary for examining reality, for that fact--examining the academic environment itself--then it seems to me we have established a motivating and meaningful context for their use.

Teach the Schemata as Strategies as Well as Structures

Classifying or comparing/contrasting can be taught in cookbook formulaic fashion, and with writers who

hold few complex schemata in their repertoire, this patterned instruction might be necessary. At first. We would then want to show students other uses, other shapes--wean them from learning an inflexible discourse frame (Rose, 1981). But we also want to teach comparing/contrasting as a cognitive strategy, as a way to explore things, as well as a way to organize what we discover about them. Note the difference from usual textbook treatment--not static modes, but "ways to think systematically about complex topics" (Flower, 1981, p. 74).

Sequence the Schemata Appropriately

Educational theorists like Bloom (1956) and Gagne (1970) repeatedly show the benefits of arranging tasks in ways that allow subsequent tasks to build on previously learned ones. In our own field, Britton et al. (1975) have noted

> Our experience suggests that there is likely to be a hierarchy of kinds of writing which is shaped by the thinking problems with which the writer is confronted. (p. 52)

This suggests that we offer students tasks that require, for example, the presenting of steps in a series before confronting them with tasks requiring summarizing before assigning tasks involving argument. And, as frequently as possible, a previously learned structure/strategy should be incorporated into the preliminary stages of a new assignment (e.g., have students summarize a theory needed for an assignment requiring analysis) or should become part of the assignment itself. Thus, it is possible to sequence assignments and the schemata they embody so that they lead to highly complex discourse like analyzing and arguing.

Teaching these schemata allows students to begin writing academic discourse early on. They're able to construct, even crudely, a complicated essay into which they can weave their reading. They're participating in an academic context.

Examples

Let me illustrate the above discussion with three kinds of assignments from our Freshman Preparatory Program.

Seriation. The teacher reads a brief account of a burn patient's daily routine of physical therapy, medication, meals, etc.; late in the day, the patient experiences chills, nausea, and dizziness. The students take notes on the account and then in groups write a brief paper retelling the day's events. Or students take notes on the teacher's reading of a description of an intestinal virus' reduplication process. Then they're given a scrambled list of the steps in the reduplication process. In groups, students correctly order the steps and write a brief paper detailing the accurate sequence of process steps. For all assignments, students must underline and explain the function of each connective and transition they use. In this way, they become sensitive to the differences among simple concatenation, correlation, and causality.

Classification. Students view 20 slides of the human form--Raphael to Rivera. They are shown the slides two or three times and are told to observe as keenly as possible, jotting down notes on whatever characteristics of each painting strike them. They are not told anything about era, school, or painter. Then they are told to decide, with the aid of their notes, whether or not any two or more paintings could be grouped under the same characteristic. At first, students offer very general observations: "Paintings number 1, 3, 10, 19 are all very bright." "Numbers 2, 8, 20 don't look like human beings." The teacher does not criticize and puts all characteristics on the board, and then asks questions to point out similarity or generality in the categories. Students are led to refine, collapse, and subdivide categories, finally arriving at their own classification system. They then write a brief essay that proposes the system and illustrates it with specific paintings. In this way, students actually experience the process of classification as well as learn how to present its results.

Analysis. Textbook authors usually define analysis as a careful exploration that breaks an artifact, event, or phenomenon down into its constituent parts. What they don't mention is that no analyzer operates without some belief/value system, without some exploratory framework.* Toward the end of our program, we introduce students to this complex nature of analysis. We give them a list of raw data, a description of an event, or a scene or story, or we show a film or play some music. To enhance pedagogical effect, the foregoing are in some way puzzling or incomplete. We encourage discussion about them. Then we provide a theoretical framework of some sort and ask students to assume it and analyze and explain the data, event, film, etc. Thus their analysis is informed by another's perspective. Finally, we ask them to criticize the perspective--consider ways it might be lacking in accuracy, explanatory power, or comprehensibility. In these ways, we introduce students to the facts that analyses are always founded on assumptions and orientations and that any given analysis is open to investigation once its informing framework is made specific.

Some examples. Students are given a newspaper account of a suicide; they discuss it, providing their own interpretations. They're then offered an explanation of depression and "learned helplessness"; they investigate the suicide with the aid of the latter clinical theory, noting how it illuminates and how it comes up short. Students are given a list of U.S. immigration statistics from 1820 to 1977; this is followed by a quotation from Das Kapital on exploitation of labor. They're given the Barthelme short story "Game"--a story of two deranged soldiers locked indefinitely in a missle bunker--and then given a series of quotations on the environmental etiology of insanity. Thus, students are shown the power and limitations of an explanatory framework, the crucial role some such

*This point is convincingly made by Popper (1968). Compare this view with that of Belth (1977), who equates all thinking with the bringing to bear of models, metaphors, analogies onto internal and external events.

framework plays in analysis (and that no analysis takes place atheoretically), how to assume--and question--an analytic framework, and how to present the result of that analysis in writing. In writing up their analysis, they usually have to rely on previously learned strategies: serializing, summarizing, comparing, etc.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND A SUMMING UP

Our institutions create deplorable conditions for our remedial writing programs and our students. But we teachers must remember that the very nature of many remedial writing courses contributes to institutional insularity, to second-class citizenship and fragmented education, to a limiting of our students' abilities to grow toward intellectual autonomy. Oddly enough, the nature of our programs is nearly in synch with the narrow reality created for them by our institutions.

Clearly, we must work to change our institutions, but we must also question our assumptions about our students' abilities and the pedagogies we've build on those assumptions. All too often we hear that remedial writers are "cognitively deficient," locked, for example, at the Piagetian level of concrete operations. These judgments are unwarranted extrapolations from a misuse (or overuse) of the developmental psychologist's diagnostic instruments, for as Piaget (1972) reminds us, if we aren't seeing evidence of formal operations in young adults, then we'd better either acquaint them with our diagnostics or find more appropriate ones. The problem might well lie with our tools rather than with our students' minds. We must assume, Piaget warns, that in their daily lives our students can generalize and analyze, can operate formally. (For further evidence that many of our young adults are not "deficient," that is, that once appropriately exposed to Piagetian diagnostic procedures they can evince "formal" operations, see Danner & Day, 1977; Kuhn, Ho, & Adams, 1979.)*

*My thanks to Professor Deborah Stipek for her helpful conversations on these issues.

What students can't do is successfully operate within the unfamiliar web of reasoning/reading/writing conventions that are fundamental to academic inquiry. Our students are not cognitively "deficient" in the clinical sense of the term; if they were, they wouldn't be able to make the progress they do. Our students are not deficient; they're raw. Our job, then, is to create carefully thought out, appropriate, undemeaning pedagogies that introduce them to the conventions of academic inquiry. Bartholomae (1979) presents one such pedagogy; the foundations for another can be found in Shaughnessy (1977). I've suggested a third approach that I'll summarize here.*

A remedial writing curriculum must fit into the intellectual context of the university. Topics should have academic substance and, when possible, should require the student to work from text. The expressive/exploratory dimension of writing ought to be exploited here. The richness of the composing process must be revealed. Too many of our students come to us with narrow, ossified conceptions of writing. Our job is to create situations so they can alter those conceptions for themselves. We have to allow our writers to be ambitious and to err. We need to integrate thinking and reading and writing; consequently, we must pressure our training institutions to give us fuller, richer definitions of writing competence. Finally, we should seriously consider the central role discourse schemata play in discovering, organizing, and presenting information. These strategies/structures, rather than sentence-level error, should be the fundament of our courses.

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*This approach is embodied in UCLA's regular year individual Freshman Preparatory Program Composition courses. However, we employ a variation in our Freshman Summer Program, in which composition courses are linked to introductory breadth courses. For a description of the Freshman Summer Program, write to Mike Rose, Department of English, 2225 Rolfe Hall, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

How flat some of our remedial courses feel. And how distant the eyes of too many of our students. But the flatness dispells and the distant gazes revitalize when students are challenged, engaged, brought fully into the milieu they bargained for. Yes, we teachers will work slowly, scale carefully, provide as much assistance as we can. But we'll still be creating an edge to our "remedial" classroom. Our students will grumble about the strain--grumbling is part of the student's drama--but they'll know they're participating in the university. And that's a strain that can make one feel worthwhile.*

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A STATUS REPORT ON WRITING ASSESSMENT

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Over the past decade, we have seen significant advances in the development of strategies to measure writing proficiency. This paper provides a brief status report on some of those developments. It begins with a review of the wide variety of reasons why educators are measuring writing skills; eight different purposes for writing assessment are described in terms of decisions to be made and decision makers. Then the two available methods of measuring writing skill--direct assessment via writing samples and indirect assessment via objective tests--are described, compared, and contrasted. This comparison is followed by a brief status report on direct assessment, in which holistic, analytical, and primary trait scoring procedures are discussed. The report then concludes with a status report on characteristics of available published tests of writing proficiency.

ADAPTING WRITING ASSESSMENT TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

Educational tests serve only one purpose: They facilitate educational decision making. No test should be administered, therefore, until the decision(s) that rest on the results of that test have been clearly articulated. This applies to all tests, including writing tests.

Writing tests are being used effectively in many educational contexts. For example, they often play an important role in instructional management decisions

(diagnosis of individual learner strengths and weaknesses, course placement, or educational and vocational planning), selection decisions (admission to an advanced or remedial program, or certification of minimum proficiency), and/or program evaluation decisions (large-scale survey assessment, formative program evaluation, or summative program evaluation).

In the discussion that follows, each of these contexts is described in terms of the decision to be made, the primary decision makers, and the type of writing skill information needed to make the decision. Decision makers include students, parents, teachers, administrators (including specific project or program administrators, as well as building, district and state level administrators), guidance counselors, and the public (including taxpayers and elected officials).

Using Tests to Manage Instruction

Diagnosis. Teachers often use tests and other performance indicators to track each student's level of development, thereby determining where that student is in the instructional sequence and anticipating the next appropriate level of instruction. Diagnostic information gathered via writing assessment can help individualize instruction by simplifying student grouping or instructional sequencing decisions. In addition, diagnostic information gathered over time may provide a basis for grading or communicating progress to parents.

Placement. Decision makers such as teachers and educational administrators are sometimes called upon to place each student at the level of writing instruction (often a course) best suited to his/her skills. Typically, they use such performance indicators as writing skill tests, previous courses completed, and grades to rank-order students along a continuum of writing skill development, then place them in the appropriate course.

Guidance and Counseling. In making their future educational or vocational plans, students may need to know how their writing skill compares to that of other students with whom they could compete. Performance indicators like writing tests can help provide such

information. Such tests can indicate the probability that a given student will find success and satisfaction in a program or professional position for which writing skill is a prerequisite.

Using Tests to Select Students

Admission. It is not uncommon in education to have more candidates for a program than program openings. When this happens, teachers, counselors, and administrators must select students for admission. Performance indicators such as writing tests can be used to rank-order examinees to facilitate selection. Selection decisions can affect those at either end of the skill continuum; that is, more able students might be selected for inclusion in advanced writing programs, or less able students might be selected for remedial writing programs.

Certification. Tests designed for a certification decision are often used to verify and document a student's mastery of specific knowledge or skills. For example, teachers might use writing tests to certify mastery of beginning writing skills for purposes of grading or promotion. Or district and state administrators might use minimum writing competency tests as criteria for high school graduation. Both represent examples of certification through testing.

Using Tests to Evaluate Programs

Survey Assessment. In survey assessment, group achievement data are collected to determine the general educational development of a student population (e.g., in writing). Data may be gathered by administering a writing test to a carefully selected random sample of students in the target population. The assessment may be cyclical, thus allowing for the examination of trends in writing skill development over time. Decision makers include building, district, or state level administrators, who allocate resources for special instructional needs pinpointed by the assessment, or the public, which makes value judgments regarding perceived and reported levels of student writing skill development.

Formative Evaluation. In the context of formative program evaluation, program administrators and/or teachers attempt to determine which components of a particular instructional program are functioning as intended and which need further refinement. They may test students on each of the intermediate and final outcomes of a writing program, for example. Assessment for formative evaluation may also involve multiple test administrations to determine the effectiveness of ongoing modifications in a writing program.

Summative Evaluation. Summative evaluation reveals a program's overall merit, suggesting whether the program should be continued or terminated. Tests designed to assess students' performance on final learning outcomes are an important part of such an evaluation. Teachers, program, building, or district administrators, and the public (including the board of education) may be involved in summative evaluation decisions. As with survey assessment and formative evaluation, multiple test administrations are common. Tests may be given prior to as well as following instruction, with retention testing after a given time interval.

Though writing tests are being used for all of these purposes, they are being used most successfully when the assessors have specified in very concrete terms which of the purposes they intend to serve. Once the purpose is established, then the assessment method can be selected.

A COMPARISON OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT WRITING ASSESSMENT

Two methods are available for the assessment of writing proficiency. One is the direct method, which relies on actual samples of student writing to judge writing proficiency. The second is the indirect method, which relies on objective tests. Research on the correlation between the two reveals a consistent and relatively strong relationship at various educational levels. Table 1 summarizes six studies that correlated objective-test scores with scores obtained on writing-sample assessments.

Table 1

Correlation of Objective-Test and Writing-Sample Scores

Researchers	Students Tested	N	Correlation
Godshalk, Swineford, & Coffman (1966)	High School	646	.46-.75
Breland, Conlon, & Rogosa (1976)	College	96	.42
Breland & Gaynor (1979)	College	819	.63
		895	.63
		517	.58
Huntley, Schmeiser, & Stiggins (1979)	College	50	.43-.67
Hogan & Mishler (1980)	Third grade	140	.68
	Eighth grade	160	.65
Moss, Cole, & Khampalikit (1981)	Fourth grade	84	.20-.68
	Seventh grade	45	.60-.67
	Tenth grade	98	.72-.76

These studies suggest that the two approaches assess at least some of the same performance factors; yet each deals with unique aspects of writing skill. These similarities and differences relate to assessment focus, practical aspects of testing, characteristics of test exercises, and aspects of test quality. Each of these factors is explained below. (For a more detailed discussion of these factors as they relate to direct and indirect assessment, see Stiggins, 1982).

Assessment Focus

Direct and indirect writing assessments focus on different components of writing. Direct assessment measures actual composition skill, while indirect

assessment measures the ability to use--or recognize proper use of--the conventions of effective writing: grammar, punctuation, sentence construction, organization, and so on. Direct assessment provides necessary and sufficient information for drawing conclusions regarding a student's writing proficiency. Indirect assessment, on the other hand, provides necessary--but not always sufficient--information for evaluating a student's writing proficiency.

An examination of traits measured via the two approaches reveals that indirect assessment tends to cover highly explicit usage skills for which there are definite right and wrong responses (e.g., either language is used correctly or it is not). Direct assessment, on the other hand, tends to measure less tangible writing skills (e.g., persuasiveness), for which the concept of right and wrong is less relevant than the concept of communicative effectiveness.

Practical Testing Considerations

Several important practical matters related to testing suggest additional differences between direct and indirect assessment. For example, effective assessment requires appropriate attitudes on the part of test users. With direct assessment, users of the test results must be willing to invest the time, money, and effort to conduct a writing assessment that calls for complex, often time-consuming testing procedures. In the case of indirect assessment, users must be willing to accept a proxy measure or a test that covers component skills of writing without actually requiring students to write. Given the appropriate attitudes, either direct or indirect assessment will most probably have its desired impact. If those attitudes are lacking, problems can be anticipated in the proper use of test results.

In either direct or indirect assessment, the examiner may either select an already existing test or construct a new test.

If one decides to use previously developed exercises and scoring criteria for direct assessment,

then the following skills will be required of those conducting the assessment: (1) technical expertise in writing, to specify which writing skills will be assessed; (2) test evaluation skills to investigate available options and select test items that measure the skills to be assessed; and (3) highly developed organizational skills to set up, administer, score, and report the results of the assessment.

Selecting an already developed objective test requires the expertise to determine the information needs of the test user and to review and select a valid and reliable test. Some training in the technical aspects of testing is important. In most cases, the user will also have to be skilled in interpreting and using norm-referenced standard scores.

Developing a new direct instrument, which involves creating a new set of exercises and criteria for scoring, also demands organizational skills and technical writing expertise. In addition, however, psychometric expertise is required in order to evaluate the validity and reliability of the assessment procedures and to refine exercises and criteria as necessary.

Developing a new indirect assessment requires (1) technical expertise in writing to plan the assessment; (2) skill in item writing; (3) organizational skills to pilot test, analyze, and select the test items; and (4) psychometric expertise to evaluate the test's reliability and validity. In this case, a high degree of technical sophistication in testing is essential.

In short, developing new instruments for either testing approach requires substantially more expertise and staff time than does using existing assessment instruments. Further, the most critical skills for successful direct assessment are technical skills in writing, while the most critical skills for successful indirect assessment are technical skills in testing.

Characteristics of Test Exercises

There are some fundamental differences in the kinds of test exercises used in direct and indirect

writing assessment. First, the exercises differ in form. Direct assessment exercises generally take the form of a short passage that invites the examinee to respond to a question, state an opinion, resolve an issue, explain a process, recount an event, or simply express his/her feelings. The exercise, if well constructed, identifies for the examinee the form of writing to be produced, audience to be addressed, and purpose for the writing. Indirect assessment items often follow a multiple-choice format, though fill-in questions are sometimes used. Various interlinear forms, as well as sentence-combining items, are common.

As a result of differences in format, direct assessment exercises are considerably more flexible than indirect assessment exercises. With direct assessment, the stimulus can be auditory or visual and can be quite true to life (e.g., writing a job application letter). Indirect test items, on the other hand, are generally constrained by the particular test-item format used. Therefore, while direct assessment exercises can be made to closely approximate "real world" writing, objective test items are somewhat more artificial.

Judging Test Quality

The factors commonly considered in judging the psychometric adequacy of a test are reliability and validity.

Reliability and validity considerations for direct and indirect measures are quite similar. In the case of direct measures, score stability is important over time, across exercises, across test forms, and across raters. With one exception, the same is true of indirect assessment. Consistency across raters is not an issue with indirect measures since scoring is totally objective. In both cases, sources of inaccurate scores include poor test items and improper test administration. Sources of score inaccuracy unique to each approach include guessing in the case of indirect measures and poor or inconsistent ratings in the case of direct measures.

Validity considerations are similar. Content validity is relevant to both types of writing tests. Experts should verfiy that the test measures the skills it purports to measure. Criterion-related validity, also important in both cases, can be verified by correlating test scores with other indicators of writing proficiency, such as course grades or other tests of writing proficiency.

Summarizing Assessment Options

Direct and indirect approaches to writing assessment are perhaps best compared in terms of their relative advantages and disadvantages.

The major advantages of the direct assessment option are (1) the richness of information provided about examinees' writing proficiency, (2) potentially high fidelity (authenticity) of the exercise and response, (3) the adaptability of exercises to a variety of relevant real-world writing circumstances, (4) high face validity for users, and (5) relatively low test development costs.

The major advantages associated with the indirect assessment are (1) high score reliability, (2) relatively low scoring costs, and (3) high degree of control over the nature of the skills tested.

The disadvantages of the direct method include (1) high scoring costs, and (2) the potential lack of uniformity among examinees regarding the proficiencies assessed.

The disadvantages of the indirect method are (1) lack of fidelity to real-world writing tasks, (2) heavy reliance on examinees' reading rather than writing proficiency, and in many cases (3) lack of face validity of the objective measure for users.

Developers of writing assessment programs would do well to keep these differences clearly in mind when planning an assessment program.

THE STATUS OF DIRECT ASSESSMENT

Though there have been several important developments in direct writing assessment, such as strategies for developing better prompts or writing exercises and improved methods of analyzing the psychometric quality of writing sample ratings, the most important advances have come in the development of new methods of actually rating student performance. Writing tests that rely on writing samples require individual hand scoring by qualified persons trained to apply agreed-upon criteria and performance standards. Several different methods have been devised for scoring writing samples, depending on the assessment purpose. The most appropriate method in any given situation depends upon what information one wishes to gain through scoring, how that information will be used, and what resources are available. Some scoring methods are more complicated--and therefore more costly--than others. This section presents a comparative overview of the general advantages and disadvantages inherent in each of three approaches: holistic, analytical, and primary trait scoring.

Holistic Scoring

In holistic scoring, raters review a paper for an overall or "whole" impression. Specific factors such as grammar, usage, style, tone, and vocabulary undoubtedly affect the raters' responses, but none of these considerations is individually evaluated. As with all rating methods, raters must be carefully trained to conduct the evaluation. The purpose of training is to minimize (at least temporarily) the effects of individual biases by helping raters internalize an agreed-upon set of scoring standards. It is generally recommended that raters be experienced in language arts, familiar with pertinent terminology, and practiced in rating student papers at the grade level for which they will be scoring. Consistency--both among raters and among scores assigned by a single rater--is very important in holistic scoring. Careful training and "refresher" training sessions throughout the course of any scoring activity are the keys to maintaining the desired consistency.

Papers are rated on a numerical scale that can range from four to eight points. Four-point scales are most common. An even-numbered scale is recommended because it eliminates the convenience of a mid-point "dumping ground" for borderline papers.

Prior to actual scoring, the most qualified or experienced raters review a subset of the papers to be scored in order to identify "range finders." These are papers that are representative of all the papers at a given scoring level. With a four-point scale, for example, there would be range finders for the 4, 3, 2, and 1 levels. Range-finder papers must be so typical of papers at a given level that virtually all readers agree on the assigned scores. This is vital because range finders are used in rater training and later as models to assist raters during scoring. Experienced readers may have to read dozens of papers in order to find the "typical" range-finder papers with which everyone is satisfied. For training purposes, it is advisable to have at least two (preferably more) range finders at each level.

Reviewers do not work from any predetermined set of criteria in identifying range finders. They may, of course, discuss their findings and observations during the process. But it is important to realize that in holistic scoring, there is no preconceived notion of the "ideal" paper. A paper assigned a score of 4 will simply be a relatively high-quality paper within the group of papers from which it was drawn; it may or may not be an excellent paper in its own right. The score assigned to any given paper in holistic scoring is determined by the quality of that paper in relation to all other papers being scored in that particular assessment. If one has in mind some specific criterion of writing performance that students must demonstrate, holistic scoring will not be appropriate. One of the other two methods described below would be more appropriate. Scoring levels are set from within the sample of papers to be rated, irrespective of external standards.

The holistic approach quickly produces marked consistency among raters--in virtually any group. This may be partly the result of peer pressure. But more likely, it suggests that language arts people can agree--though the bases for their conclusions may differ--on what constitutes a relatively good and a relatively poor paper. It is not uncommon for inter-rater reliabilities (that is, the correlation between scores assigned by any two raters) to reach .60 to .80. They can be even higher depending upon the background of the raters and the amount of training time allowed for raters to internalize the score levels.

All papers should be read by at least two raters to minimize the chance of error resulting from rater fatigue, prejudice, or other extraneous factors. Scores may be added or averaged across raters to determine a final score. Disagreements of more than one rating point should be resolved by a third reader or through discussion by the disagreeing raters.

Holistic scoring is rapid and efficient. Depending on the length of student responses, experienced raters can usually go through 30-40 papers per hour (though inexperienced raters cannot be expected to match this rate). Six hours of scoring per day is considered about maximum to maintain high reliability. Scoring is intensive work; short hours with frequent break periods yield the best results.

Because scoring levels are only defined in terms of sample papers, holistic scoring does not permit the reporting of specifics on student performance. After reading hundreds of papers, however, raters typically have a supremely clear notion of what factors influenced them to assign particular scores. For reporting purposes, they can often translate those observations into level definitions.

Analytical Scoring

Analytical scoring involves isolating one or more characteristics of writing and scoring them individually. Analytical scoring is most appropriate if one wants to measure (and report) students' ability to deal

with one or more specific conventions of writing: punctuation, organization, syntax, usage, creativity, sense of audience, and so on. Traits must be explicit and well defined so that all raters understand and agree upon the basis for making judgments. In addition, it is necessary to delineate in advance specific and complete criteria for judging each trait. In analytical scoring, raters rely on written guidelines--not range finders--to assist them in assigning scores. Ideally, raters should have a chance to participate in selecting traits and establishing criteria. This promotes understanding of and agreement with criteria, and ultimately enhances interrater reliability. Except for the setting of criteria, rater training and test administration procedures are similar to those for holistic scoring.

Analytical scoring provides data on specific aspects of student writing performance. But does it really reveal whether, in general, students write well? The answer depends on (1) whether enough traits are analyzed to provide a comprehensive picture, and (2) whether those traits analyzed are significant--that is, whether they actually contribute to good writing. In an effort to identify those characteristics that seem most to influence a reader's judgment about the quality of a piece of writing, Diederich (1974) performed a content analysis on a sample of student essays scored holistically. As raters scored papers holistically, they were invited to make comments regarding performance in the margins of the papers. Later, those comments were tallied to isolate the factors that seemed to most influence experienced rater's scores. Here, in decreasing order of significance, are the factors Diederich isolated through that study: ideas, mechanics (including usage, punctuation, and spelling), organization, wording, and flavor (or style).

Factor-by-factor analysis of writing elements is more time-consuming than holistic scoring. Depending on how many factors one looks at, it requires two to three times as long (or more) to rate a paper analytically as it does holistically.

Analytical rating has been criticized because there is some indication it produces a "halo" effect; that is, students who are rated high on one trait will tend to be rated high on all traits. Despite this potential disadvantage, however, analytical scoring has one great advantage: it provides potential for trait-by-trait analysis of students' writing proficiency.

Primary Trait Scoring

Primary trait scoring is similar to analytical scoring in that it focuses on a specific characteristic (or characteristics) of a given piece of writing. However, while analytical scoring attempts to isolate those characteristics important to any piece of writing in any situation, primary trait analysis is rhetorically and situationally specific. The most important--or primary--trait(s) in a letter to the editor will not likely be the same as that (those) in a set of directions for assembling a bicycle.

The primary trait system is based on the premise that all writing is done in terms of an audience, and that successful writing will have the desired effect upon that audience. For example, a good mystery story will excite and entertain the reader; a good letter of application will get the interview. In a scoring situation, of course, papers must be judged on the likelihood of their producing the desired response.

Because they are situation-specific, primary traits differ from exercise to exercise, depending on the nature of the assignment. Suppose a student were asked to give directions for driving from his/her home to school. The primary trait might then be sequential organization, for any clear, unambiguous set of directions would necessarily be well organized with details presented in proper order. As Mullis (1974) points out, "Successful papers will have the [primary] trait; unsuccessful papers will not--regardless of how well written they may be in other respects."

The first step in primary trait scoring is to determine which trait or traits will be scored. The second is to develop a scoring guide to aid raters in

assigning scores. This guide specifies the characteristic of papers scored at each level on the rating scale. Range-finder papers may be used in addition to the scoring guide. This practice is not common, however, for many raters find it cumbersome to rely on two points of reference--a scoring guide and range finders.

All raters should be familiar with the rationale underlying the primary trait system and with the level definitions to be used in scoring. Raters must accept the fact that they will be looking for specific, well-defined traits, and they must be cautious about allowing extraneous criteria to influence scoring.

As with analytical scoring, defining criterion levels is the most time-consuming step. It may be necessary to "test" numerous definitions on sample papers in order to arrive at a set that works. Herein lies a strong argument for keeping the list of traits to be scored brief. On an average, a day of trial and error, discussion, and debate is needed for each trait to be defined. This may sound time-consuming, but the quality and clarity of the final definitions, and the ease with which they can be applied, will readily justify the time spent.

Like analytical scoring, primary trait scoring can allow the reporting of student performance with respect to specific characteristics; e.g., organization, awareness of audience. For this reason, primary trait scoring is greatly favored over holistic scoring in contexts where more precise information is needed. But this advantage should be carefully weighed against the time and effort required to set up a workable primary trait scoring system.

Selecting Scoring Procedures as a Function of Purpose

Selection of scoring procedures is, in effect, part of assessment planning, since this decision is influenced by the purpose for the assessment and the criteria to be used in judging writing proficiency.

To illustrate, diagnosis of individual students' strengths and weaknesses demands the level of specificity provided through analytical or primary trait

scoring. Placement and guidance, on the other hand, may only require holistic ratings because the goal of the assessment is simply to rank-order students on a continuum of writing skill.

Different considerations are relevant when measuring for student selection. While admission may require a holistic ranking of students, certification may be done through holistic, analytical, or primary trait scoring, depending on the specificity of the minimum competencies to be certified.

Holistic scoring procedures are well suited to the relatively broad, unfocused nature of large-scale survey assessment. However, analytical scoring may serve as well if the need for more specific data justifies the additional time required.

Scoring procedures for formative or summative evaluation depend on the specificity of the objectives that guide instruction. If general writing proficiency is the focus of the program, analytical scoring may be selected. However, if instruction focuses on situation--specific rhetorical skills, primary trait scoring may be most appropriate. In most instances, assessment for program evaluation demands scoring procedures more specific than holistic scoring.

STATUS OF INDIRECT ASSESSMENT VIA PUBLISHED WRITING TESTS

On the indirect assessment side of the ledger, many educators and educational institutions continue to rely on published writing/language arts tests to measure student proficiency. In order to evaluate the status of these tests and assist educators in selecting from among available tests, the Clearinghouse for Applied Performance Testing at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory investigated the nature and quality of currently available tests. Through an extensive search of common test-information reference documents and correspondence with test publishers, we obtained technical and descriptive information on 51 published tests of language usage and/or writing proficiency. Each test was then reviewed and profiled in terms of nine characteristics: test type, publication

date, test length, use of writing sample, mode of score interpretation, grade level, skills tested, type of reliability reported, and type of validity reported. The information contained in these profiles was then analyzed with respect to the nature of available tests and to the evolution of the tests over time.

Overview of the Tests

The general characteristics of this sample of tests are summarized in the first columns of Table 2. On the basis of these data, a number of generalizations are warranted regarding these published tests:

1. There appears to be rapid growth in the publication of language arts/writing tests.

2. The tests are about equally divided between stand-alone tests and those included in multitest achievement batteries.

3. Over three-fourths of these tests take less than an hour to administer.

4. Approximately 30 percent of all tests include writing samples as at least an option.

5. Most tests provide for norm-referenced interpretation, with criterion-reference interpretation a common option.

6. Most tests are for elementary, junior high, and high school; few are available for adults.

7. Mechanics of usage is tested more frequently than any other skill, but higher order skills (e.g., organization and composition) are also covered, according to publishers.*

*The skills measured by any given test are taken to be those explicitly reported by the test publisher in the technical manual for that test. We presume, based on this information, that test items in each instrument actually relate to the skill areas identified. However, that link was not explicitly verified by comparing test items to test specifications.

Table 2

Summary and Evolution
of Published Tests of Writing Skill

Characteristic	Total Sample		Percent by Year Published			
			Prior to 73 (n=12)	73-75 (n=5)	76-78 (n=15)	79-81 (n=19)
			24%	10%	29%	37%
Type of Test	N	%				
Stand-Alone Test	24	47	50	20	33	63
Subtest of Battery	27	53	50	80	67	37
Test Length (in minutes)						
0-30	13	25	17	40	20	31
31-60	29	57	67	40	67	47
61-90	4	8	8	0	7	11
91-120	5	10	8	20	7	11
Writing Sample Included						
Yes	15	29	8	0	20	58
No	36	71	92	100	80	42
Score Interpretation						
Norm-referenced	28	55	92	60	27	53
Criterion-referenced	11	22	0	20	27	31
Both	12	23	8	20	47	16
Grade Level Focus of Tests						
Elementary	20	39*	33	40	53	32
Junior High	23	45	58	40	67	21
High school	28	55	50	40	60	56
College	16	31	50	20	0	47
Adult	4	8	0	20	13	5
Skill Areas Tested						
Spelling	26	51	67	60	53	37
Mechanics	41	80	92	80	93	63
Word Usage	41	80	75	60	100	74
Sentence structure	28	55	67	40	27	63
Organization	19	37	33	20	20	58
Writing	11	23	17	20	20	26
Type of Reliability Reported						
Internal consistency	44	86	83	100	93	79
Parallel forms	16	31	42	60	13	31
Test/retest	11	22	8	40	20	26
Interrater	4	8	0	0	7	16
No reliability reported	5	10	0	0	7	21
Type of Validity Reported						
Content	38	74	83	80	80	63
Concurrent	17	33	33	40	40	26
Predictive	10	19	8	0	13	37
Construct	7	14	0	0	0	37
No validity reported	6	12	8	0	0	26

*Interpret as follows: Publishers of 39% of 51 tests claim that their test is designed for use at elementary grade levels; note that tests are commonly designed for use at multiple levels.

8. Most publishers address internal-consistency reliability and content validity in technical material; few address other aspects of reliability and validity.

Evolution of the Tests

The remaining columns of the table report data on changes in test characteristics over time. For simplicity and clarity, tests are categorized by publication date into three-year intervals.

Test development has accelerated in the past six years. Thirty-four new tests have appeared during this time period, with slightly more than half of them (i.e., 19) appearing in the past three years. This growth of interest in writing tests parallels the highly publicized, apparently widespread concern over declining writing skills among students in the United States.

The type of test available to purchasers--either stand-alone or battery--has also undergone a marked shift in the past ten years. In the sample of tests reviewed, tests published prior to 1973 were evenly divided between stand-alone measures and subtests of achievement batteries. From 1972 to 1979, the vast majority of language skills tests (80% in 1973-75 and 67% in 1976-78) were part of a larger test battery. During the last three years, however, publishers have abruptly reversed this trend. Since 1979, 63% of all the writing skills tests developed have been stand-alone tests.

Though test length has appeared to remain constant during the last three years, the use of writing samples at all grade levels has risen markedly. One of every two tests developed since 1976 now provides for the option of having examinees compose an original piece of writing. In fact, almost all of these 15 tests have appeared during the last three years. This growing popularity of writing samples may have been spurred by the development of improved scoring procedures and by renewed interest among language arts educators in judging writing proficiency by evaluating actual composition in addition to objective-test responses.

There have been pronounced changes in test score interpretation over the past ten years. Prior to 1975, test developers relied almost totally on norm-referenced interpretation. From 1976 to 1978, criterion-referenced interpretation emerged, with nearly three-quarters of all tests allowing that option. In recent years, that trend has appeared to be reversing, with a return to greater reliance on norms.

Overall, more tests have been developed and published for older students, but no age group has been neglected in the race to construct new instruments for assessing students' writing skills. For example, in the last six years, 14 tests were developed for elementary students, 14 for junior high students, 20 for high school students, nine for college students, and three for adults. Incidentally, all nine of the college-level tests reviewed were published in the last three years.

What about the types of skills tested? Here another pattern of change emerges. More of the recently developed tests are measuring students' ability to recognize good sentence structure and to organize information. This change is accompanied by a corresponding decline in attention to spelling and mechanics. The emphasis on more complex composition skills (e.g., sentence structure, organization) appears related to the increase in tests designed for older student populations, rather than to any broader change in skills tested across age and grade levels.

Test quality, as judged by technical reports of reliability and validity, offers an additional perspective on how tests have changed. Overall, the reporting of data on reliability has declined noticeably. For example, during the past three years, only 79% of the tests provided estimates of internal-consistency reliability, versus 93-100% in previous time periods. During the past three years, only 31% reported parallel-forms data, and 26% included test-retest data. During the last six years, a few test publishers have begun to report interrater reliability, an important consideration in the use of writing samples. But, in a

rather surprising turnabout, a substantial number of new tests (21%) now provide no information at all on reliability. Until the new phase of writing-test development in 1976, 100% of the tests reported some reliability information to perspective purchasers.

Information on validity shows similar changes. Although recently developed tests address a wide variety of types of validity, slightly over one-fourth of the tests published in the last three years report no information on validity, thereby providing purchasers with no assurance that these tests should actually be used for their intended purposes.

SUMMARY: THE KEY TO SUCCESS

There have been many important developments in writing assessment over the past decade. Many of them have been reviewed here. Some of the most important reasons for measuring writing skills have been enumerated along with some of the available writing assessment methods. Direct and indirect assessment options were compared and contrasted, the various writing-sample scoring procedures were reviewed and compared, and the evolution of published writing tests was explored.

This status report began with the admonition that those responsible for writing assessment be keenly aware of the purpose for their assessment before beginning the assessment process. Given all of the options described in the report, it should be apparent how crucial that preplanning really is. It is not possible to make an informed judgment regarding how writing should be measured until one knows why it is being measured. The key to success in writing assessment is fixing a clear objective at the outset and planning to meet that objective.

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CLOSING REMARKS

Challenges for the Future

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

This has been a conference to discuss problems in writing, policies affecting both writing instruction and the assessment of writing, and possibilities for improving the teaching and evaluation of writing. The presumption is that we are concerned about improving the learning of writing, to the end that all writers become good writers, or perhaps that all writers at least become better writers.

The several research papers and the policy and problem papers in this volume indicate scholarly concern and knowledge, the informed judgment of practitioners, and the belief that there are, indeed, ways to improve the teaching and learning of writing. This belief is given encouragement by one participant who states that we know much more than we did twenty years ago concerning the composing process and concerning how to help all writers become good writers. If we do know more than we did, we have part of the solution to our problems. One of our tasks, it follows, is to put that knowledge to effective use. Among all the problems discussed here, the fundamental one is that of determining how to put our knowledge to effective use. A further problem, of course, is how to continue expanding our knowledge.

This has been a positive conference. Nobody has spoken disparagingly or despairingly of the teaching profession or of education. They have spoken of the need for improvement--of the fact that with many students we are falling short of what is possible. And no one has suggested that there is not any excellent teaching taking place in our postsecondary institutions and in our public and private schools.

We did hear of the problems in the teaching profession, including the need for people who can teach composing more skillfully and with better results than has been the case in the past. We know, on the basis of what we have heard, that the problem is compounded by its pervasiveness in our system. The need for skilled teachers who themselves write well is paramount at all grade levels. Recognizing the special needs of students whose first language is not English is another dimension of the problem. The concern about remedial instruction at the college level and throughout the school system, the unrealistic burdens on teachers of composition, and the relative neglect of composing skills in too many English departments in too many institutions are just a few of the areas identified as contributing to the problem. These and other problems suggest the need for policy decisions that will help to improve the learning of writing skills by all.

The problem has many facets. The solution is complex. In California alone there are more than 1,000 school districts, each with considerable autonomy in those aspects of the instructional program that can influence the teaching and learning of writing. Nationwide there are more than 20,000 such districts. Add to this the hundreds of institutions of higher education, the church-related and independent schools, and we realize that we are dealing with tens of thousands of policy-making bodies that can affect the quality of writing instruction. Among these bodies there are many conflicting opinions about where priorities should lie. Such policy-making bodies may not be badly fragmented in terms of the generalization that writing skills are important; but when absolute choices must be made, when some important subjects must be slighted or discarded, our policy makers will be divided. As a result, one of our challenges is to help unify thinking among policy makers concerning the importance of writing, and to accomplish this feat in an educational system in which control is decentralized and dispersed among many thousands of policy makers.

Part of our challenge lies in the political arena. Some of the most influential educational decisions in this century have been the product of political action.

The stress on mathematics and science in the sixties was the result of political action at the federal level; and the "new math" about which we used to hear so much was a direct outgrowth of that political action. The mandate to teach foreign languages in elementary schools in California in the mid-sixties was purely and simply a result of political action in our State Legislature. The Governor of California in his recent call for revitalizing education through stress on the "Three C's"--computing, calculating, and communicating--gives us the promise that education, under some conditions, is still politically attractive. However, the Governor's stress on "communicating" should not be misconstrued as concern about communicating through writing. Rather, it relates to communicating electronically through the use of modern technology. I doubt if writing plays even a small part in the third "C."

It is neither possible nor appropriate to look for political solutions to the problems of teaching writing. When either the federal or the state government intervenes in the educational process, historically it has been because of a perceived national crisis. There is little possibility in today's climate of arousing great national concern over a crisis in writing instruction. So we look to other means, several of which are easy to identify:

1. We identify ways that decisions are made in our decentralized system, and we design strategies for influencing those decisions.

2. We start with efforts to attract the attention of existing groups of policy makers--associations of teachers of English, of course, but equally important, associations of school board members, school administrators, college trustees, and parents.

3. We continue to expand the activities of the various writing projects that have been so successful.

4. We work with those who determine how teachers are to be educated and licensed.

This task is so big, so ponderous, that a simple solution is not available. Perhaps we need to think of other conferences like this one, but dedicated not so much to identifying the problems, which has already been done, as to developing positive strategies to carry into effect that which we know is possible.

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